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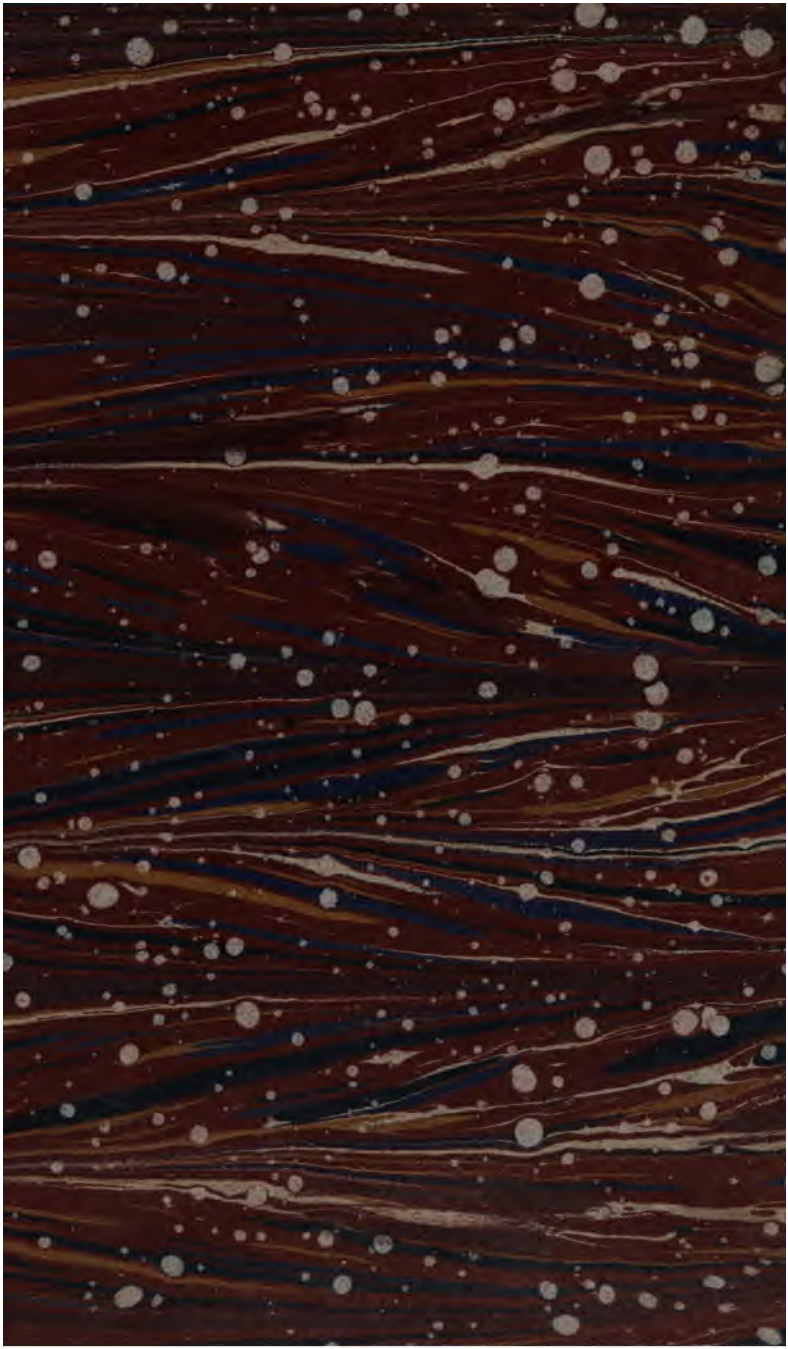

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COLBURN'S

MODERN NOVELISTS.

FLIRTATION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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FLIRTATION.

CHAPTER I.

Oh! friend, to dazzle, let the vain design;
To raise the thought, and touch the heart be thine;
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the ring,
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing.

POPE.

THREE weeks had elapsed since the General arrived in London. Lady Emily had been taken to all the fashionable places of resort, introduced to many of those who frequented them, and initiated into a great variety of scenes and secrets that saddened and depressed her spirits. Upon the whole, though she was much admired, yet the reality of London delights, viewed through the medium of

mere fashionable existence, fell far short of the enchantment in which she had pictured them to herself, or which she had heard her sister describe them to be. The day for Lady Frances's marriage was now fixed. It was shortly to take place; and she was at the height of good humour and complacency—that species of good humour which depends upon the fulfilment of its wishes. She had, indeed, sacrificed some inward feelings; but it was a sacrifice scarce acknowledged to herself; pride, and a spirit of vengeance, made her fancy herself indifferent. She had obtained her end in being made a great, and what she valued still more, a fashionable personage, and she now condescended to take her sister under her protection.

One day, as she was driving her to Blondell's, the milliner's, the sisters held the following colloquy. "Well, my dear Emily, I am happy to tell you, that upon the whole you have had very fair success. Had you been under my auspices it might have been better; but, take it altogether, you have been extremely admired; and if you will only follow my advice, I doubt not you may yet do very well, as well as myself."

"Oh, that would be difficult!" said Lady Emily, smiling.

"There is Lepel, for instance," continued Lady Frances, "an exceeding good judge, and a very kind good-hearted man, quite the person whose advice one ought to take, because he is intimate with all the young men of the day. Well, he vowed that you would be one of the finest creatures going, if you would only copy a little of my self-possession.—'Why don't you, my dear Lady Frances, (he spoke quite in a confidential manner to me)—'why don't you tell that charming sister of yours not to be always crying at the tragedies and laughing at the comedies, and in such preposterous ecstasies with the Zuchelli and the Rosalinda, just as if she had never been at an opera before in her lifetime, and did not know that people of the world never go into public to be affected by any thing. Really, Lady Emily's beautiful features are quite disfigured sometimes by all those violent commotions. It is very well for the housemaid and one's valet; but, indeed, even they know better now-a-days how to behave themselves. It is only permissible for a lady to suffer the cor-

ner of her mouth just to turn, when the irresistible Mr. Liston is on the stage, and she may hold the corner of her pocket-handkerchief to the eye when Madame Pasta acts Medea. But really those sobbings and showerings—and then the laugh, which may be he heard in the next box!' But do not look so *ébahi*, Emily—a little time will set all these things to rights. If you were not my sister, and that I should be ashamed of you if you went on so, believe me I would not take the trouble of telling you all this—for I hate a long prose; only this once I give you notice, that positively I cannot go out with you into society, if you continue to attract the attention of well-bred persons by your vulgarisms."

"But how can I help it, Frances, dear? When I am diverted I always laugh, when I am touched, I cry."

"But you must not be either the one or the other, my dear, I tell you; and if you feel that invincible rusticity of emotion so strong upon you, the only recipe I can give to counteract its effect, is to turn from the stage altogether."

"And talk to Captain Lepel, I suppose?—Oh that is enough to make any one grave I grant

you; he infects one with his own insipid affectation of indifference."

"I assure you it is much more *comme il faut* to turn about, and flirt with your cavalier, than to sit square, as you do, with your eyes fastened on the scene."

"But I have no cavalier, and I do not exactly know how to set about flirting."

"As to having no cavalier, that, you know, must be your own fault; but it is, I am afraid, Emily, because you have *one*, or rather an imaginary *one*, that you say you have none. Now I am by no means advising you to have *one* only; you should at least have half a dozen, and play them all off the one against the other. To one, you might talk of dogs and horses; to another of perfumed gloves; to another of the Flirtations which you see passing around you: for instance, of my Lady A, and my Lord B;—to another of the comparative merit of opera-dancers; and, if the conversation turns on the beauty of other women, never criticise, for men always set that down to envy; but make some allusion which will excite a comparison with your own charms to your own advantage. For instance, if you have

a finely formed head, talk of that as being a beauty in some other woman in whom it is quite the reverse; or a finely turned ancle by the same rule. This draws attention, elicits comparison, obtains a compliment, and induces a sort of concealed understanding, so that a few glancing looks afterwards are sufficient to carry on the war. Thus you see how easy it is to flirt; and without flirtation, you cannot possibly get on in the world. Then, never talk to women when you can help it, only just enough to keep up *les bienséances*—whatever you do, however, remember never to *blesser les bienséances*. But during all conversations, recollect to stop yourself short whenever you begin to grow prosy. Utter only short vague sentences, dropped as if they meant nothing; no disquisitions, no harangues upon taste and fashion; above all, no sentiment, or bookish *étalage*, which every body detests, and no one has time for, even if they had patience.—The great secret of conversation, is to treat it in the manner the French do their cookery, "*Il faut que rien ne domine;*" it should be a sort of touch-and-go, just as a swallow catches a fly, always on the wing; so that you never find your auditor yawning or

leaving you in the midst of a sentence, with, 'I beg you a thousand pardons, but I see Lady de Luce there, just going away, and I have something to say to her of the utmost consequence; good night!" and there you are *planté là* with your speech half finished."

"But, my dear Frances, where am I to get these half dozen cavaliers that you talk about? I assure you nobody admires me or thinks of speaking to me; and if I had them in attendance, the idea that I must be quite different from what I really am, would strike me dumb. I love dogs and horses, for instance, and can converse about them in my own way by the hour; but then I should not know how to talk of them in the way men talk of them, which very often seems to me very cruel and always very uninteresting; and as to turning my discourse upon the Flirtation, as you call it, of Lady A, and Lord B, why I should die of shame. Then in regard to the merits of the opera-dancers, how can I judge of them who never saw any before?"

"There is something either very obstinate, or very provoking in you, Emily; you are always talking of loving and liking, *vous revenez tou-*

jours à vos moutons. Now that is precisely what you must never do; no well-bred person *talks* about *love.* You must think only of appearing to the best advantage, being in the best society, and keeping the reins of fashion in your own hand. Never let one day or rather one night pass without being in the first circles, for out of sight out of mind, and if you attend well to that rule, and take especial care *no day of rest* should intervene, you will soon find that it naturally becomes impossible you should think of any thing else. As to flirting, which seems to shock you so very much, that is only because you attach all sorts of meaning to the word which do not of necessity belong to it, and which people of fashion never intend it should be applied to; that is the fault of your country education."

"Well, but Frances," said Lady Emily, "surely when a woman is married, she has no business to make believe to other men that she is, or may be brought to be, in love with them?"

"In love!—there again; whoever talks about being in love?—In love has positively nothing to do with these arrangements."

"Well, but if a husband sees a wife sur-

rounded by men engaged in discourse with, and whispering to her, and that when he joins the party he seems to be one too many, what does he say? Of course he despises his wife, sends her away, kills his rival, or some dreadful tragedy ensues; and how could I talk of the flirtations of a married lady if they really do exist, when it leads to such disgraceful, such terrific consequences?"

"Why, Emily, what an incorrigible simpleton you are! Who is talking of murder, and misery, and ruin, and all that sort of Old Bailey stuff? Why such things are never alluded to seriously by people who are well-bred. The most they say on such topics is, 'Dear how shocking! La, how horrid!'—And then somebody makes a good joke of it, to put the disagreeables out of one's head, and it ends in a laugh. Your ideas are quite ridiculous, quite false, I assure you. Before you have spent another season in London, you will learn, that a man of fashion would not endure his wife if nobody else flirted with her. His vanity would have no gratification in such a piece of still life; and I am sure *she* would be dead tired of *him*, if he never flirted with anybody else. In

short, to flirt, is the only way to live well together. Why, there is the young Lady B. and her husband, they appear to me to be on the best possible terms. He is quite *aux petits soins* with her, when they do meet, but he is not in the least troublesome to her, or she to him; and they really speak to each other as kindly as possible; but I am sure it is for the very reason that they leave each other at perfect liberty. Besides, it is what every body does."

"And do you mean to do so, Frances?"

"To be sure I do."

"Oh, Heaven forbid, Frances, that you should be serious."

Lady Frances laughed: "And pray let us hear what *you* would do;" said she.

"Live for my husband entirely, devotedly," replied Lady Emily with enthusiasm; "be happy with him abroad, and still happier at home; make my house and myself agreeable to his friends, having no friends myself that were not his likewise; and being so very a part of himself that he could not do without me.—Liking the life he led, whether of gaiety or of seclusion; following his pursuits, or at least endeavouring to be interested

in them; thinking of his interests, however much they might interfere with my previous habits and tastes; using my influence to induce him to attend to his public duties, if ever, through indolence or self-indulgence, he was inclined to forget them. In short, finding my own happiness in doing the duty of a wife."

"*Maussade*, enough; and besides, where do you expect to find this phœnix with whom you are to *filer le parfait amour?*—Prepare to be an old maid, Emily; for I see no hope of you if you continue to persist in these nonsensical resolutions."

"I should be sorry for that, Frances, too; I know marriage is not a state all sunshine, but I am sure I could keep it free of all storms; and to be an old maid is such a melancholy, lonely idea, that if you please, do not condemn me to it: I never would marry any one I did not esteem and love, and then—"

"Pho! how sick I am of that word love, so perpetually in your mouth; one would think it was meat, drink, and clothing."

"Ay, and so it is, dear sister! and more than all these things put together would be without it."

At this moment, the carriage drove up to the

miliner's, and while Lady Frances was standing before a mirror trying on an Opera hat, Lord Bellamont came in: he had seen her carriage and followed her thither.

"Dear me," cried Lady Frances to her sister, "how provoking! here is Lord Bellamont just when I do not want him." At the same time, she put on her most engaging smile when he approached, saying:

"Ah! you are just come to assist me in my decision—shall I take this Berri? or this hat with the drooping feathers?" and she tried them on successively: "which do you think prettiest?" turning to him with a sweet, deferential look.

"Every thing, dearest Frances, that you put on becomes beautiful;" whispered the enamoured Lord Bellamont.

"Nay, now, don't be silly; do decide; do tell me which I shall take."

"Take them both, my love," he whispered; "and this thing," (holding up a train of a magnificent lace dress,) "and what do you call this, Mademoiselle Blondell? it looks very pretty, don't it, Frances? have this, too, and this."

"*Vraiment, Milor a bon goût, on voit bien*

qu'il s'y connoit, c'est tout ce qu'il y a de plus nouveau."

"Put them all up," he added, "and direct them to Lady Frances Lorimer. And, Lady Emily, allow me to offer this slight tribute to your charms," (pointing to a lace dress, as magnificent as the one he had just selected,) "do accept it, at least from your sister." Thus, having put his bride into good-humour, he was rewarded by one of her brightest smiles, and she graciously condescended to promise to meet him at the coackmakers, to look at the new carriage he had ordered for her.

The whole morning was spent in driving from one place to another; and when at last Lady Emily found herself in the comparative tranquillity of her own room, she sat down to collect her thoughts from the unsatisfactory hurry of the last hours. She wondered, considering how much variety she had seen of persons and things, that nothing remained to fix her attention upon, or excite one single idea. A mixture of brilliant gewgaws danced before her eyes, and troops of well-dressed persons, together with bows, glances, nods of compliment, and shreds of talk; but absolutely

not one *idea* was presented to her recollection out of the whole mass. An impression of a sad, unsatisfactory kind was the general result of the retrospection of her visit to London; and she sighed to think how differently she had pictured it to herself from what she had found it to be in reality.

Miss Macalpine entered the room while she was absorbed in such melancholy musings. This kind-hearted, but abrupt and simple-minded woman, had penetration enough to discover that Emily's heart had wandered away from her own keeping—that her happiness was no longer in her own power; but she had not sufficient *tact* or refinement to treat the subject delicately, and she often wounded when she meant to heal.

"Well, Lady Emily, and what'n braw things hae ye been feasting your eyes upo' the day? I daure to say, now, yere wishing ye were Lady Frances, or rather it 's more like your ain sel to be thinking o' ane that 's no here. It 's unco queer-like, that Lord Mowbray should be awa to his castle in Dorsetshire."

Lady Emily started: "To Dorsetshire!" and

turned pale as she added, "then we shall probably never see him again."

"Hoot! what's the lassie thinking about; ye'll see him often eneuch, I'se warrant. It's lang ere the diel dies at the dike side—no that I would sae ony thing disrespecfu' o' his Lordship, wha's behaved sae vara genteel to me; but only I would na wish that you should just be setting yere fancy on a chiel that's no to ride the water on, I'm feared."

"What puts it into your head, my dear Alpinia, that I have set my fancy upon him, as you call it?"

"I may be wrang; it's no sae easy to say, forby that it may be ye dinna weel ken what ye would be at yoursel; but I'm thinking ye forgathered owr muckle wi him at the Ha', no to be unco taen up wi him, that's for certain."

"I wonder, dear Alpinia, you allow so many fancies to enter your brain; but at all events, you know we are going into retirement for ever, and therefore there is little chance of our meeting him again. As soon as Frances's marriage is over, we take our departure for Somersetshire; and my

poor uncle's affairs are, I fear, hopeless"—(her eyes filled with tears as she spoke). "You know it is not the loss of the fortune I lament, Alpinia; it is to see my uncle's spirit broken down, and sinking beneath the insolence of that purse-proud Duke of Godolphin. But how do you know, Alpinia, that Lord Mowbray is gone from town?"

"By a written line o' his ain haund;—here it is," and feeling in her pocket she produced the note which was as follows.

"My dear Miss Macalpine, some unexpected business calls me to Mowbray Castle. If I should not be able to pay my respects to the General before my departure, I beg you to make my compliments and regrets at not seeing him to take my leave, acceptable to himself and to Lady Emily, &c. &c.

"MOWBRAY."

"So he is gone!" said Lady Emily, looking paler than before; "and I have never seen him since the night of the Opera, soon after we came to town!"

Miss Macalpine shook her head. "Woes me, but I fear there 's something no just right in that young Lord. I canna tell what na thing it is ails

him; but yon Rosalinda and he seem to hae been acquaint lang since syne, and thae Italians are no canny—fearfu' like bodies; whan they get a grip o' a man they never let go. Ye suld na be thinking o' him, Lady Emily; for every time I hae remarked him weel whan ony body has spoken o' that Rosalinda, a kind o' cauld sweat, like the dead thraw, has stood on his brow, and that's a sure sign there's something wrang. Dinna let him wile the heart out o' your breast—remember there's as gude fish in the sea as ever came out o't, and my advice till ye is, no to fash mair about him."

"I! dear Alpinia, not I—what right have I to think about him? he never thought of me."

"Oh, for the matter of that, as the auld song says—

'Luve will venture in whar it daure na weel be seen,
Luve will venture in whar reason ance has been.'

And then, that same Luve will not give place to reason's sel'. Ance in, it's no' so easy to drive him awa'—it's a waur job, may be nor ye think o', my puir lassie"—and Miss Macalpine sighed a heart's sigh. "Now take my counsel; don't be letting

the canker o' care feed on your heart's core—your cheeks are no' the rosy cheeks they used to be; and the sparkle is out o' your ee, and—"

"Now, do not be fancying all sorts of things, Alpinia, that are not true; how can any body look well in the hurry of a London life? and besides, should I not be more hard-hearted than a stone if I could see my dear uncle turned out of his home—the home he loves so well, to be a wanderer, a sort of outcast, and not feel for him."

"That 's true; my vera heart 's sore, thinking o't. Oh! if he could only come and stay a while wi' me at Heatherden! it would be a proud day to me to see him there."

"Under other circumstances, I doubt not my uncle would be delighted to become your guest; but when the heart is crushed, and the prospects of life darkened as his are, there is nothing but an independent situation, however humble, which can afford repose or refuge to a noble mind."

"And you, Lady Emily, are determined, I hear, not to accept Lady Frances's invitation, though she really wishes to have ye."

"What, and leave my uncle? how could you suppose such a thing?"

"I never did enterteen sic na thought: I knew well eneugh that ye would never forsake him."

"There, Alpinia, you did me but justice; besides, I have no merit in this determination, for I love no body so much; at least"—(and she blushed and hesitated, for, to the shadow of a shade, Lady Emily always spoke the truth)—"at least I love no one *better*, nor can I ever—in *another way*, perhaps, but in no way with more true devotion of heart and soul."

Here a note arrived:—

"From Mrs. Neville," said Lady Emily, opening, and reading it. "She wants me to go to Lady Orwell's this evening, but I shall not accept her proposal; for to-morrow is the grand fête which Prince Levenstein gives at Roehampton, which I own I should like to see, as it is the first thing of the kind, and may perhaps be the last at which I shall ever be present; so I would not leave my uncle for two nights together. I shall say nothing, therefore, to him about it, else he will order me to go, and get Lady Glassington to come and make up his card-party."

"That's weel thought; but are ye sure ye

would na go if I could get ony ane to tak your place at the card-table."

"No, Alpinia, I assure you I am very anxious to keep my own place there; it is delightful to be necessary to the amusements of those we love."

This matter arranged, they separated till dinner, and in the evening, notwithstanding Lady Glassington's fury that morning, she could not withstand an invitation to make up the General's table, and accordingly obeyed the summons.

"This is really like you, my dear lady," said the General, going to the door to meet her: "you do not retain any rancour against me, and I make no doubt I was in the wrong, since you found fault with me."

"Ah," said Lady Glassington, with a smile of allusion to recollected love: "there was a time when you and I might have found it a dangerous thing to quarrel and make it up again. But now, the sooner we agree after a little angry discussion the better, for we know not how long we may be alive to quarrel."

This little bit of sentiment quite softened the General's tender heart, and there was something like a renovation of their ancient innocent Flirtation

established between them for the rest of the evening.

Just as the cards were cut, and Miss Macalpine and Lady Emily were settled as partners, a servant announced that Mademoiselle Blondell had brought home Lady Emily's new dress, and wished her Ladyship to try it on, in case any alterations should be necessary; for she was afraid if she did not receive her orders that night, she could not possibly call the next day; having so much to do, she should be obliged to disappoint a great many ladies.

"Oh!" said Lady Glassington, laying down her cards, "by all means go, my Lady Emily—General, order her to go, and try on her dress, and we shall see how she looks in it."

"Dear Lady Glassington, I assure you, I am not the least anxious about the matter. Do not, I pray you, disturb your game for me. I never tried on a gown in my life; it will do vastly well, I have not the least doubt of it; let it take its chance, pray." (To the servant.) "Tell Mademoiselle Blondell 'tis all right."

"No, no, my love! Lady Glassington is so good as to excuse you, and you *shall* go."

"For ony sake, Lady Emily, dinna leave it to the last moment, and then may be find ye canna wear it," cried Miss Macalpine, who dearly loved to feast her eyes on finery.

"Very well, then, I will not detain you a moment," and away flew Lady Emily.

"Emily, Emily," cried the General, "remember to come and show yourself to us."

A brief quarter of an hour sufficed to Lady Emily; and when she returned, the whole party were struck with the extreme splendour and beauty of her and her attire, which seemed to confer mutual lustre upon each other.

"Really," cried Lady Glassington, "it is a vastly handsome dress, a magnificent dress—there now, don't stoop; hold up your head whatever you do; a lady never looks so well as when she maintains an upright position of the head; remember first to turn your chin over one shoulder, then over the other, drawing yourself well up at the same time, and stepping back a pace or two, thus: while, at the same time, you play off your fan, thus:" and Lady Glassington showed her a receipt for practising the graces.

"Vastly well, my Lady Glassington, vastly

well, nobody had a finer carriage than you. Emily, you cannot do better than take a leaf out of her Ladyship's book on the Graces—"

Suddenly the door opened, and in came Mrs. Neville, leaning on Lord Mowbray's arm. Lady Emily's astonishment, pleasure, and even emotion at the sight of one she fancied two hundred miles off, lent a new heightening to her beauty, and she stood silent.

Mrs. Neville ran on as usual: "Well, now, isn't it charming, charming! here you are ready-dressed: come along with us, Emily, to Lady Orwell's. Well, to be sure, it was the luckiest thing in the world how I came to think of calling here, after having received your apology; but my Lord Mowbray happened to drop in, and I thought Lady Orwell would be so delighted if I could only take her such a smart cavalier.—For a wonder, he consented, and so I brought him away in my carriage; but I do not think I should have caught him, if I had not been coming here first. And now that you are ready, Lady Emily, why should you not go too? It will ensure me the entrée at Lady Orwell's for evermore, if I can carry two such stars along with me!" During

this speech, Miss Macalpine was holding a private discourse with Lord Mowbray. "Come along, my Lord; Miss Macalpine, do not detain him—make haste, there 's no time to be lost."

But here a loud knock announced another visitor; and while they were forming conjectures who it could be, Lady Frances made her appearance. After having paid her compliments to the company, she uttered an exclamation of surprise, on seeing Lady Emily.

"What an exhibition!" she exclaimed; "so you would not go to Lady Orwell's to-night;" and she glanced her eyes significantly from Lord Mowbray to her sister's attire—"so that is the reason,—oh, oh!"

"No, indeed, Frances," Lady Emily replied, whispering and blushing, "you are quite mistaken; nothing made me decline going to Lady Orwell's; but not liking to leave my uncle without his party."

"Well, Emily, we will not dispute about the matter; but at least I will do you the justice to say, that for once you have got a very beautiful gown, and are really well dressed, thanks to Mademoiselle Blondell. Truly, it is quite beautiful:"

and she examined it all over. "Is she not perfectly well dressed, my Lord Mowbray?"

"Well dressed!—yes, perhaps so; I don't know, upon my honour; but if you ask me how Lady Emily looks, I think she is just as handsome when she has less finery on."

"Oh, but you know there is a time for all things. One is not always to be *en robe de chambre.*"

"I think," said Lord Bellamont, "that ladies disfigure themselves very much by all their millinery contrivances; and if they would only adopt some sort of dress more analogous to the human form, and keep to that, they would look much handsomer. The less of contrivance, and quirks, and puffings, and plaitings, and gimpings, and little ins and outs the better. Something large, flowing, of fine material if you will, only none of your contrivances. Look less at milliners' shops, and more at pictures; but nothing can ever look well, so long as women paint their faces."

"Oh, dear! you must go back and be born over again, and live in the times of the Greeks and Romans; though I think my governess told me, the Roman ladies used the same aids to

heighten their charms. As to me, I am quite contented with the things as they are. But how comes it, my Lord Mowbray, that you are still in London?" continued Lady Frances. "I thought you were gone; at least, you told me some nights ago that you were going to Mowbray Castle?"

"But going and gone are two things, Lady Frances. Business detained me to-night; still I intend going to-morrow."

"Are you resolved?"

"Resolved is a great word for such a trifling circumstance:— I *intend* to do so."

"By-the-by, Emily," said Lady Frances, addressing her sister, "I wish to speak with you; for to-morrow I may not see you till we meet at the ball," and she led her sister into an adjoining room.

"Sister dear," said she in her sweetest tones, "I have a favour to ask of you."

"I am rejoiced, Frances, to hear it; for you well know, that if in my power to grant, it shall be complied with."

"Well," rejoined Lady Frances, "to tell you the truth, I have just been trying on my gown for to-morrow's ball, and it does not please me—it is

all white, and with my black hair it looks quite like a magpie. Do, there 's a good girl, do change dresses with me: your fair hair and light blue eyes, will suit the angel pretension of all white; but it does not answer to me, that is certain. In short, if you will but grant my request, I will do any thing for you afterwards. You know Lord Mowbray has seen you in this, and you do not want to get up any *new* Flirtations; therefore one gown is the same to you as another."

Lady Emily smiled as she replied—"No, Frances, one gown is not the same to me as another. I do not pretend *that*, for every body likes to look their best, especially on an occasion of so much show and ceremony as that of to-morrow; but I shall, with pleasure, give you up mine, if it makes you happier."

"Well now, Emily dear, that is very kind. When I am married, I hope I shall be able to do as much for you. So now ring the bell, and order Mademoiselle Blondell to take your dress to my house, and bring mine here."

The order was given; and Lady Emily, having disrobed herself of her pink and silver, made a ready sacrifice of it to her sister, and in a few mi-

nutes more returned with her to join the rest of the party, clad in her usual simple array.

"My Lady Glassington," cried Mrs. Neville, "of course we shall see you to-morrow at the Prince's ball."

"Mrs. Neville, there is no *of course* at all in the business; or else, it is true, you *ought* to have seen me there; but every thing is *out of course* now-a-days."—Then settling her petticoat with one hand, and laying hold of Mrs. Neville with the other—"Now do, there 's a kind person —do lay aside your useless hurry for once, and sit down while I tell you a story."

"My Lady Glassington is quite in her zephyr mood," whispered the General to Lady Emily.

"General, I say, General! do listen now to what I am going to say to you."

"I am all attention," he replied, looking very serious.

"As I sat in my *peignoir* while Marshall was adjusting my head-dress, he said; 'Your ladyship, will, I conclude, want my attendance, for the Prince's ball to-morrow night.' 'And pray, Mr. Marshall, what makes you conclude any thing

about the matter?'—'I beg your Ladyship's pardon,' said he, 'only I thought, I imagined—that his Serene Highness would not give an entertainment to the whole Court in which your Ladyship was not included, and besides, I know from pretty good authority, that tag, rag, and bobtail will be there to-morrow night.'—'But I would have you to know, Mr. Marshall, once for all,' (and she arose and extended her arm theatrically,)—'that my Lady Glassington is neither tag, rag, nor bobtail.' —Now, Mistress Neville, are *you* answered?"

"Bravo! my Lady," was uttered on all sides.

"Why yes," she said; "I think I have done for Marshall, and posed Mrs. Neville, and that is saying a good deal."

"Well to be sure! charming, charming, it is beyond belief: the best thing I ever heard in my life! I shall go and tell it at Lady Orwell's.—Excellently good! 'I am neither tag, rag, nor bobtail!' Well to be sure,—but I must be gone, so good-night, General, good-night, my Lady Glassington, never mind, my Lord;" and shutting the door in his face as Lord Mowbray rose to hand her to her carriage, she left Lady Glassing-

ton in undisputed possession of the field to say of her whatever she chose.

After a decent pretence of interest in her uncle's health, Lady Frances took her departure also, and Lord Mowbray making a fifth in the coterie, was requested to cut in at the card-table.

"If you will give me leave," he replied, "I had much rather take up a book and occasionally look on."—Accordingly, he established himself behind Lady Emily's chair, and opposite to a long mirror which reflected her profile. On this, his eyes were much oftener fixed than on his book; and though the General several times apologised for his rudeness in going on with his game while his Lordship had nothing to entertain him, the latter assured him in all sincerity, that he did not wish to be more agreeably employed: several times, indeed, his reverie was interrupted by Miss Macalpine's crying out—"There now the lassie's clean daft: why, was na that the best spade? yere aff at the nail, I think; wha but your ain sel' would ha'e thought o' trumping the best spade."

These reproaches, Lady Emily bore very meekly, for she felt that the cards were dancing before her eyes in gay confusion. At length fortune be-

ing herself blind, favoured the blind, and Miss Macalpine having now a bumper rubber, considered that all was right, and forgave the hair-breadth escapes and desperate risks which Lady Emily's heedlessness had caused her to encounter.

After the card-party broke up, Lady Glassington and the General got upon old topics; and, in talking of many a departed friend or accquaintance, they went over their juvenile years again, and forgot the passing hours. Miss Macalpine, Lord Mowbray, and Lady Emily sat apart from them, forming their own amusement. Lord Mowbray seemed much entertained by Lady Emily's descriptions of all she had seen, and he ended by asking her, whether she preferred the town or the country.

"I should like," she replied, "always to spend a portion of the year in town, but the greatest part of it in the country. If I must choose the one or the other for ever—oh certainly then, the country; but neither in town nor in the country would I live exactly as I see any body live."

"How so, Lady Emily?"

"Why I would not, because I was in London, determine never to pass an evening at home with

my family; neither would I in the country be for ever without society; a large house in the country filled with pleasant people would be delightful."

"Hech, sirs!" said Miss Macalpine, shaking her head, "my Lady Emily, you 're no' for a puir man's wife—that 's certain; though I thought otherwise ance; but no' a bit o't; dinna ye ken that there 's nathing sae wasterfu' as to keep open doors in a country house, feeding the piper's maws, we Laddie, although doubtless, in the Highlands, nae body ever shuts them, but then ye see it 's unco different like from the ways o' England. Here, gin ye 're asked to a neebur's it 's no' expected ye should stay mair than ane night at ony haund; and three or four days at the vera best, is a' ye can reckon on: even frae friends indeed, that same, it 's like eneugh, will produce glied faces wi' mony a sly hint that ye had better no' stay langer. Hospitality is na the growth o' this cuntrie; 'tis a shining, and appearing, and striving to get the taye ane afore the ither; and if, my Lady Emily, ye will choose to combine the General's Scotch ways, wi' the cauld ceremonious grandeur o' the southerns, ye maun keep a sharp luke

out, and get a hantle siller to keep yer head abune water. But it is no' for a' that, that I 'm blaming you; on the contrair, it pits me in mind ye ha'e a gude drap o' mountain blood in your veins, and I like you a' the better. It 's but natral too that ye suld tak' pleasure in the fine balls and grand doings that are going on here, and I am surprised, now there 's a prospect o' sae mony o' thae things taking place, that you, my Lord, should be just gawing awa'."

"I have nothing to do with balls and fêtes, my dear Miss Macalpine. These things are only fit for young men."

"Why, to hear ye talk, one might suppose ye were the age of Methusaleh at the vera least."

"And so I am; age and youth are not designated by years alone, but depend on a thousand circumstances, which wither the one or nourish the other. For instance, look at General Montgomery, who ever feels that he is old?"

"Oh!" said Lady Emily, with an expression of anxious concern, "do you not see a great change in my uncle ever since that fatal story at the Hall. Since we have left that dear place, he has never been himself."

"What fatal story? do tell it me," said Lord Mowbray; "for, though a vague report has reached me, I never heard it related distinctly."

"Oh! you remember I began to tell it you at the Opera, just as Rosalinda came on the stage, and I stopped to look at her, when, on turning again round to speak to you, you were gone, and I have never since that moment seen you."

These words were common words; but there was that in the tone and manner in which they were pronounced which spoke volumes to Lord Mowbray. He looked in Lady Emily's face earnestly, her eyes fell beneath his gaze; and she was painfully conscious that her colour went and came, betraying the emotion which his scrutiny excited. All farther conversation was put an end to by Lady Glassington rising to depart; but how much may a mere glance leave on the mind to be reflected and commented upon!

CHAPTER II.

To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their free-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy?

GOLDSMITH.

THE next morning, when Lady Emily prepared to rise, a beautiful bouquet was brought to her bed-side. "Oh the dear delicious flowers," she said, inhaling their fragrance; "who can have made me this charming and most welcome present? who brought it?" calling her maid.

" A little boy, your Ladyship."

" Are you sure it is for me?"

" The boy said so, my Lady; besides, there is a card that you have not observed tied to the stalks."

Lady Emily looked at it. In a very illegible hand was written " For Lady Emily Lorimer." " I cannot imagine who should so far have consulted my tastes," she said, but her heart throbbed at the secret thought that it might be Lord Mowbray. It is necessary to be a woman, and a woman in love, and, moreover, a woman in love with flowers, to know all the witchery which resides in them. The full force of all these things was confessed by Lady Emily; and when the hour arrived at which she was to prepare for the ball, at Roehampton, she had recourse to these simple ornaments as her only decoration. The gown her sister had sent her in exchange for her own, could not compare with it in beauty or magnificence; but in its rich materials and perfect simplicity, there was a grace not less distinguished, than had it been covered with ornaments.

The General however, when he looked at her with delighted eyes, demanded the reason why she

had discarded her dress of the preceding evening; and she was obliged to relate the circumstance which had induced her to resign it. How the knowledge of this enhanced her loveliness in the General's estimation! and with what affectionate warmth he pressed her to his heart, and blessed her, as he said, "Go, my precious girl! go, and in all the reflected beauty of your soul shining through your person; go, and enjoy the innocent triumph which awaits you. I grieve that I cannot accompany you; but, circumstanced as I am, you will understand, my Emily, that it is impossible."

"It is a bitter disappointment to me that it should be so, but I only wish you to do whatever you feel to be best. Good, good-night, dear uncle; good-night, Alpinia."

Mrs. Neville was punctual to a moment, and away they drove; but the impatience of the latter made her stop the carriage many times before they reached Hyde Park Corner, to know what o'clock it was, lest, as she said, they should be too late.

They arrived, however, in good time, and entered the grounds by a gate which was metamorphosed into a triumphal arch, most brilliantly illuminated and decorated with various devices.

The lamps, the flowers, the train of servants in rich liveries, the crowds of guests in fancy costumes, formed a splendid scene.

The ball-room had been erected in the gardens, and was blazing with lights, and gay with a profusion of ornaments in the best taste. On entering, Lady Emily distinguished Lord Mowbray leaning against one of the pillars.

The moment he perceived her, with an eagerness of manner wholly unlike his usual demeanour, he came towards her; and, on Mrs. Neville's expressing her surprise at his being still in town, he said—"Business called me away, but pleasure detained me."

"Well, to be sure, that is charming—so you really tell the truth *at last;* but I never believed you when you said you were going; it is beyond belief how I can read characters; it is vastly diverting, vastly charming, quite charming, I assure you."

"You are an alarming person then, Mrs. Neville, to be intimate with; I shall take care in future how I venture to lay myself open to your animadversions."

"What, have you any deadly secrets, then?

—Well, to be sure, I was always afraid there was some mystery or another about you. Now, to tell the truth, I don't like mysteries, except in story books, and even in them I always look at the last page first. Don't you think that 's charming. Well, to be sure, I would always advise every body to do that in real life—turn to the last leaf of your story, provide for that, and all will be well. Ah! who do I see there? —Mr. Altamont, I vow! How do you do, my dear Mr. Altamont? Don't you agree with me in what I was saying just now?"

"Most entirely, my dear Madam, I really thought I was talking myself."

"Well, charming, charming! that is beyond belief; but I must present you to my young friend, Lady Emily Lorimer—you will like one another, I can answer for that."

A regular introduction took place, and Mr. Altamont of course joined their party.

During the whole of Mrs. Neville's evolutions, Lord Mowbray attended Lady Emily's footsteps; and when, about midnight, a summons was given to the company to view the fireworks, he offered her the assistance of his arm

to conduct her through the gardens. There is something so sociable in the acceptance of an arm—it facilitates conversation—it is, for the time being, an interchange of kindness—a tender of service from the one party, and an implied trust on the other, which is gratifying to both. In the present instance, however, it did not seem productive of much ease of intercourse: neither Lady Emily nor Lord Mowbray spoke; while, on the contrary, Mr. Altamont and Mrs. Neville never ceased talking.

"Come," said the former, turning to Lord Mowbray, "you seem so very silent, that I think you must be tired of your post, however extraordinary it appears that such should be the case;—so let us change partners awhile. You will keep Mrs. Neville in order. She is a great deal too lively for me; and I will venture to say, I will make Lady Emily laugh. Come, Lord Mowbray, do not be such a monopoliser. Lady Emily, do me the honour," and he extended his arm to her.

"You forget, my dear Altamont, that Lady Emily might be the death of one of us, if she were thus to decide in favour of either. I am not sure

that even your cloth would protect you ; no, no, dull as I may be, Lady Emily has accepted my arm, and it must be only at her especial desire that I can relinquish the honour she has conferred."

Mr. Altamont bowed, saying jocosely, "Oh, oh! is it so?" then, blowing his fingers, added, "burnt children dread the fire—I shall know better another time how to address your Lordship." And he whispered to Mrs. Neville, "This begins to look serious. But pray, my dear Madam, tell me since when has this hot flame been kindled?"

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief if it *is* kindled, for I declare I never heard of it; well, charming, charming! I vow and declare, there is nothing I should like better! She is a delightful creature, thoroughly good, that I can answer for—none of your flimsy fashionable dolls! With all the graces of refinement, she combines the every-day substantial qualities of head and heart within and without."

"And be she what she may," observed Mr. Altamont, "Lord Mowbray is worthy of her."

"*He!*—Oh—I don't know what he is!—so strange, so unequal, so mysterious! I told him

just now I hated mysteries; straight forward for me—well, to be sure, more mischief is done by your mysterious folks, than by any other set that go about. Do you know, I have fancied there is something between him and the Rosalinda, which may prevent his being a marrying man; and I 'd tear his eyes out, if I thought he intended to make that sweet girl Lady Emily unhappy. It is beyond belief, how I could hate him if I thought that were possible."

"It is quite impossible, my dear Mrs. Neville, I am sure he never intended to make any thing, much less any body, unhappy in his life."

"May be so; but intentions are one thing, and actions are another."

"Humph!" said Mr. Altamont, as if overcome with the heat and pressure of the crowd.

At that moment, they came up to Lady Frances, who was leaning on Lord Bellamont's arm, but turning her head and talking to a number of young men over her opposite shoulder. Her dress was splendid and glittering among the lights, and she herself was radiant in beauty.

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Neville, seizing hold of her petticoat, "what have you got here? borowed plumes, borrowed plumes! Well, to be

sure, it is beyond belief; so you wheedled Lady Emily out of her beautiful dress—the more shame for you; I never missed it from her, she is so lovely without it; but now I see it upon you, I remember all about it."

"Come away," whispered Lady Frances to Lord Bellamont, "let us avoid this horrible vulgar woman; I have steered clear of her hitherto."

"How very unlucky! but now I fear it is impossible," replied Lord Bellamont, "and there is the signal-rocket."

Lady Emily now came forward, and her sister could not avoid standing close by her, although she would gladly have evaded the neighbourhood. "Really, Emily," said she at length, "you look vastly well; you cannot think how that white dress becomes you, does she not, my Lord?" turning to Lord Bellamont.

The latter sighed, as he replied: "Lady Emily is secure of one great point towards the perfection of all beauty, namely, the unconsciousness she evinces to her own charms."

"I am afraid I am as vain as most people," said Lady Emily, laughing; "it is only because you do not know me thoroughly, that you invest me with so much undeserved humility."

"Bless me!" rejoined Lady Frances, with ill disguised pettishness, "what a pity it is that you two are not to be linked together in the holy bands instead of myself; I protest you are better suited to each other; the one so complimentary and proper, the other so diffident and sincere."

Lord Bellamont whispered something in her ear and looked distressed; at this moment the fireworks began. They were of the most magnificent description known in this country, and the exclamations usually uttered on such occasions, expressive of admiration or amusement, were reiterated by the spectators. Lady Emily was unfeignedly delighted; and, as she beheld the drops of liquid fire which fell like brilliants in the clear æther, and vanished in their birth, she said, addressing herself to Lord Mowbray, "Why cannot such bright visions be arrested? they do but mock the sight with their brief enchantment."

"Is it not so with all that is fairest, all that is dearest, upon earth?" asked Lord Mowbray, as he gazed earnestly on her countenance, while the blaze illuminated her features.

"I hope not," she replied, "I believe not. What is fairest and best here lives hereafter."

"Matter for an homily," interrupted Mr. Altamont, who overheard this conversation; "if all young ladies discoursed thus, one might endure to listen to them."

Lady Emily laughed, and hoped they should be better acquainted, and that he would yet listen to her very often.

"Do you know," he said, "I feel as if I had been acquainted with you all my life; every now and then one does meet with persons whom one certainly has been living with all one's life-time, only without knowing it, till suddenly one's eyes are opened to their recognition, and there they are. Is not that mighty good nonsense, Lady Emily? at least, does it not convey to you, figuratively, the sort of feeling I mean to describe?"

"Oh, perfectly!" she said, smiling; "and it has opened whole volumes of you, and your identity to me, more than any regular drawn plan of your character could have done."

"Well, let us forthwith, fair lady, swear eternal friendship. I would be your true knight

evermore, were I not already engaged; but as it is, I may be your true friend, and I will; so that matter is settled."

Another burst of fire-works prevented farther conversation.

"Was it not a splendid display?" said Mrs. Neville, the moment it ended.—"Well, to be sure, I never saw any thing of the kind finer: hunch, hunch! it is beyond belief; but Lady Frances, I say,—no, no! you shall not escape me so, either—let me look at you—so you really have got Lady Emily's gown? Well, it was vastly amiable in her to give it you—I do not think I should have been so soft, though. I hope you are very much obliged to her; to be sure, it is beyond belief: well! it does not much signify to her, that is one thing, for she is exactly one of those few persons who do not depend on dress. The less she appears as though she came out of the hands of a milliner the better; more than most folks can say—not even of the young and handsome—eh, Mr. Altamont?—I say, Mr. Altamont—Mrs. Fitzhammond, Miss Frisby, do stop a moment, if you please; only listen,—here is my Lady Frances, who has persuaded Lady

Emily,—listen to my story, if you please;—well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, but quite true, nevertheless; here is my Lady Frances, the bride elect, who has persuaded my Lady Emily to give her this splendid dress and to take up with hers instead; did you ever hear of any thing so good-natured on Lady Emily's part?—and, except by an accident, it would never have come to my knowledge; for I do not think Lady Frances would have told it, and I am sure Lady Emily would not. However, I conceive it to be a great pity that such a story should *not* be known, so I call on you all to listen to my words."

Lady Frances, during this running fire of Mrs. Neville's tongue, was endeavouring to get away, and affected not to hear her; but the crowd prevented her progress, and she was under the necessity of hearing that lady's comments. The person on whom it made the deepest effect was Lord Mowbray: he treasured it in his heart of hearts. . . . . .

The company now dispersed in the gardens, which were illuminated, and a singularly fine night in July invited them to enjoy the beauty of the place. The effect of the illuminations

among the trees and flowers was like some fairy revel.

"Look at the clear transparency of this emerald light," said Lady Emily. "One might fancy one saw the very juices of the leaves playing through their delicate fibres: and look! there again, in those parts of the foliage where the shadow falls, how dense, and almost awful. So mysterious, and yet, too, like a thing of life! for the waving of the boughs makes the gloom seem peopled with shadowy tribes."

"I wish my fancy were as fresh as yours, Lady Emily," replied Lord Mowbray; "but at all events pray speak on, it does me good to hear you."

"It does you good!" replied Lady Emily, laughing; "I am sure I am glad of it. I did not know that my chatter could do any body good, except my dear uncle. Oh! how I wish he were here with us. If he were here, I should be perfectly happy. He and I have often admired the glowworms beaming on his favourite south terrace; and perhaps this would remind him of that loved scene; but this is indeed far more splendid—yet perhaps there is something more delightful,

after all, in the natural lamp of the inhabitant of the woods. There is, in the reality of Nature, a charm of which one never wearies."

"Oh, trust me!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray, gently pressing her arm to his heart; "I am convinced it would be impossible ever to weary in your society, or ever to be happy were I for ever banished thence."

Lady Emily was silent; but the accelerated pulsations of her heart, the tremor of pleasure that ran along every fibre of her frame, was not wholly unknown even to Lord Mowbray. Something there is of magical in such concords of the soul, like a glass which vibrates to the unison of another, although it is untouched by mortal hand.

After a moment's silent and mutual rapture, Lady Emily broke the sweet spell, by saying; "I have heard much of the fire-flies in southern climates: are they not very beautiful? even more so than our own glowworms?"

Lord Mowbray suddenly dropped her arm, and, with a convulsive expression of mental pain, replied—"It is impossible for me to answer you."

"And yet my question is a very simple one."

"Yes—But——"

At that moment they came to a walk hardly lighted; and the sound of their own names, pronounced with certain adjuncts attached to them, made them instinctively silent. As they advanced, they found these persons were not as they had supposed them to be for some time before—Mrs. Neville, Mr. Altamont, and their party; but Lord Mowbray immediately recognized the female voice which now spoke, to be that of Mrs. Dormer.

"Every body," she said,—"every body is astonished that the Duke of Godolphin should consent to his son's marriage with Lady Emily Lorimer, after the dreadful suspicion that attaches to General Montgomery. It is said, that on account of his great services in his younger days, the matter is hushed up, but every one believes, notwithstanding, that he was the murderer."

"Dreadful!—But is there any proof of the fact?"

"The circumstances were so distinctly related, and so accurately known by the whole household," resumed the first speaker, "as scarcely indeed to leave a shadow of doubt on the minds of any one.

What his motive could be, no person, it is true, can possibly guess; *that* remains a mystery. It may be, that the poor old gentleman was frightened, and so shot the man who probably came to extract a little money from him; but whatever was *the motive*, such is the *fact*, depend on that."

"But does Lord Mowbray know this story?" said another voice,—"surely he ought to be informed of it; for they say he is actually taken in by that busy body, Mrs. Neville, and an old vulgar cunning Scotch cousin, to have serious thoughts of the other girl."

"Oh, I cannot give credit to that report," said the other person; "for she is half a fool. Even her own sister, Lady Frances, allows it to be the case; nevertheless, it is astonishing how men are wheedled into scrapes by those sort of would-be innocents."

"Ah! all very true; well, my friend Mowbray," continued Mr. Beverley, for he was the confidant of Mrs. Dormer; "my friend Mowbray is too good a fellow to be entrapped by such an artful set. You remember, at Naples, how clearly I got him out of that scrape with the Rosalinda; I will

do the same on the present occasion, never fear: it will be fine sport."

Lord Mowbray, who had felt Lady Emily's tottering footsteps sinking under her, as she clung to his arm, and leant on him for support, during this conversation, retained sufficient presence of mind, at its close, to entreat her to repose for a moment on a bench which was just at hand; she suffered him to lead her to it.

"Malicious and contemptible liars!" he said, seating himself by her, and taking her passive hand; "I entreat you, dear Lady Emily, think not that what we have just heard respecting that part of the discourse which interests you, can for a moment be harboured in my mind—and for the rest, it can be no longer delayed. I must decide my fate; suffer me to explain to you what may seem mysterious respecting myself; but yet this is not the time or place. Allow me to request an interview with you at your own house; I earnestly implore it."

"I feel sick at heart," replied Lady Emily; "I scarcely know where I am—every thing seems to me to be turning round; take me, oh, take me to Mrs. Neville; let me go hence," she added,

rising, "I am quite able to walk, let me go hence, I cannot stay longer here, indeed I cannot."

And she rose and moved forward, heedless of every one that opposed her passage, till she was once more in a blaze of light. Many of the company animadverted upon her hurried step and strange wildness of manner; and in vain Lord Mowbray whispered to her to compose herself. She seemed reckless of all the passing scene. At length the well-known sounds of Mrs. Neville gave fresh speed to her flight.

"Well, to be sure, where can they be? It is beyond belief; I have lost them, quite lost them, hunch! hunch! Well, charming! they are gone." But Lady Emily flew forward, and in a moment caught Mrs. Neville's arm.

"There she is," said Mr. Altamont, "quite safe, I 'll answer for it. Why, in this famed labyrinth, who can expect *not* to be lost? what does one come into a labyrinth for, but to lose one's way? But when there is a Theseus to deliver one out of the maze, one need not be alarmed."

"Yes, but I am though, exceedingly alarmed, hunch! hunch! It is beyond belief how ill you

look, Lady Emily; well, to be sure, you are as pale as death; charming, charming!"

"I am not well, in truth, dear Mrs. Neville, a sudden dizziness, a faintness has come over me. I was obliged to sit down for some time, and even now I am very little better; if you please, we will go home directly."

"Pho! pho! child, you are only tired to death hanging about here. Come into the circle—bless me! it would be beyond belief if we were to go away so soon. I am sure you will be quite recovered when you come into the house and take some refreshment." So saying, she hurried her along.

"Why, in the name of wonder, Lord Mowbray, what have you done with Lady Emily?" asked Mr. Altamont, in a low tone of voice.

"I have done nothing; but some vile mischievous tongues have been busy with their poison, and unfortunately it has come to Lady Emily's ears, and has sadly agitated her. But do not ask me any more questions just now; I will tell you of all this to-morrow."

"Why, I protest I never heard any thing so romantic in the course of my life! Why here is

an Ariadne and a labyrinth, and a Minotaur for aught I know, or some hobgoblin or other that will do as well, to make out the mystery—time midnight—scene an illuminated garden. Why I never heard of any thing better for the foundation of a romance; but I would rather have had no romance in this instance, unless, indeed, that romance of real life—an honest love that ends in a happy marriage."

"My dear Altamont, you distress me. A truce to jesting."

"Jesting! I never was more in earnest."

"And so am I," rejoined Lord Mowbray, and left him somewhat abruptly.

Mr. Altamont again rejoined the ladies, who had by this time reached the supper-rooms, in which the whole company were now assembled. Then rushed that hum and buzz of indefinite and discordant sound which rose and fell with painful pressure upon Lady Emily's ear. Once more they found themselves jammed up close to Lady Frances, immediately behind a door, from whence it was impossible either party should diverge till the crowd dispersed by mutual consent; and what made this vicinage more painful to Lady Emily

was, that she was absolutely driven against Mr. Carlton, who was talking to Lady Frances. Mrs. Neville stood immediately before them and was not silent.

"Well, my Lady Frances, so you are here again, with your fine gown—well, to be sure, *it* has been amazingly admired," (laying a marked emphasis on the pronoun it)—"I dare say you are quite fresh, and not a plait out of place, eh? Well, charming, charming, it is beyond belief how some people are always thinking about their appearance."

Lady Frances now assumed one of those marble masks which some people learn to put on at pleasure, when they intend to repel the random shafts of blustering truth, and no Greek statue ever stood more apparently insensible to all that could be said. Scarce was the eyelid suffered to vibrate, while the quiet monosyllable, pronounced with all the passive insipidity of an automaton uttering by clock-work, left the beholder in doubt whether she were indeed a beautiful image or a living woman.

Mr. Carlton whispered in her ear, "What a

vulgar woman! how came you to be acquainted with her? really, Lady Frances, I would not trust my character in your company, if you associate with such ostragoths."

"Dreadful!" was the reply; "never mind, we shall soon get rid of them."

"Mr. Carlton," said Lady Emily aloud, "you must be aware that I overhear your conversation, and that to speak disrespectfully of a friend of mine, when I am so situated that it is impossible for me to escape hearing you, is a sort of unpardonable rudeness of which I conceive no gentleman would wish to be guilty."

"I am sure, Lady Emily, I ask you a thousand pardons—a friend of yours is she? who could have dreamt of such a thing? what, that odd-looking personage? Oh! really I could not have imagined such a thing possible," and he bowed sarcastically.

"Did you ever," said Lady Frances to Lord Bellamont, who stood on the other side of her; while he, sufficiently displeased with the coxcombical pretensions of Mr. Carlton, and the coquetish manner in which she received his attentions, re-

plied gravely, "I never heard so powerful a rebuke, more femininely made, or more richly deserved."

"Nay now, dear Lord Bellamont, only look. It is quite impossible not to laugh; and if one lives in the world, it is, you must allow, in vain to fight all the battles of one's vulgar acquaintances. Pray do not make yourself so particular; really we shall be the jest of half the town if we quarrel *before* marriage. Afterwards, indeed, it will be only *selon les règles*."

"He is an impertinent ——"

"Nay now, dear Bellamont, remember," cried Lady Frances, who began to be seriously alarmed for what might happen *before* marriage, and she laid her white, ungloved hand upon his arm.

Mr. Carlton, who had not the smallest intention of endangering his precious person, and seeing that this was not his golden opportunity, pushed through the crowd, and disappeared.

"Softly, if you please, my good gentleman," said Mr. Altamont; "remember that we are not in the club of The Mohawks, of the *present times*, though we are in the presence, it may be, of some of that—*detestable gentry*."

"Well, to be sure, he has almost knocked me down," said Mrs. Neville. "Certainly such behaviour would not have been permitted or attempted when I was young. Well, it is beyond belief how much worse the world is become than it used to be."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Altamont; "there I differ from you. Some hundred years ago, I make no doubt, they had their dandies and their coxcombs, and as many heartless and characterless people—as many licentious reprobates, as exist at the present moment, only under different names, perhaps, and appearance; and they will have the same a hundred years hence, in all probability; for there is, at all times, much evil in all human societies, and in great towns of course, a larger proportion than elsewhere; but I maintain that the quantity of good is great also, so as to keep the preponderating scale in favour of virtue."

"Ah, well! you choose to look always on the bright side—that 's your philosophy."

"It is true," interrupted Mr. Altamont. "We have a parcel of fools, or ignorant idlers, who like to look like coachmen, because they are fit for nothing else, and pass their lives in jockey clubs,

and at horse races; but we have heroes, and statesmen, and divines, also, that yield not in fame and worth to any of their predecessors. So it is a mixed world of good and evil. Do not rail at the present times, my dear Mrs. Neville, nor at individuals. We are not fair judges of the former, for the very reason that we are too near them to entertain a dispassionate judgment of them; and as to the latter, it is unchristian to do so at our fellow-creatures; but it is quite right, fair, and proper, and our bounden duty, to lash the follies and rail at the vices *en masse* which come under our observation. I assure you that same employment is no sinecure; for my part, I had rather, however, whenever I can, sound the praises of the good and the great; and where is there a nation in the world—or where will there ever be, a court or a sovereign equal to our own, now, in this very now, without going back to past, or forward to future times?"

"Charming! well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, how eloquent you are! but if you had had your toes trod upon, as I had just now, by that rude coxcomb, you would not have been so sublime, but descended to particulars fast enough.

Well, to be sure, charming, charming! and look there, there's the daylight beginning to break, I declare. Ha, ha, ha! only observe what an agitation Mrs. Dormer is in, to get away from it as fast as she can, with her old young ladies, for fear of the discovery which might ensue,—ha, ha, ha! And there's the Miss Frizbys, too, in a dreadful fright, with their rouge and their wrinkles; and all the other owners of the varnished faces done up for candle-light use. Well, to be sure, it's vastly amusing; charming, charming, I declare, to see them all scudding away from the windows; only see how they all hate that tell-tale daylight. My little lily here, Lady Emily, will show them another sight when the morning breaks upon *her* brow; she will look all the lovelier for it, let it shine ever so brightly: that's now what I call beauty, something quite natural, something that's true without and within. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief; there they go again, ha, ha, ha! they cannot get away from it; look at them all with their yellow cracked faces, now the lacker is half on, half off."

"Hush, my dear Mrs. Neville, do not behave so ill," replied Mr. Altamont; "remember all

truths will not do at all times; really you will get me into a scrape if you make me a party concerned in these dreadful anathemas that you are dealing out right and left."

"Well, to be sure, that is charming! I like your pretending to be afraid of the truth. You who never told a lie in your life to please man, woman, or child; and who have as often displeased, as pleased, by saying the most literal things in the most comical manner."

"Well, well, may be so, but all truths must not be spoken at all times."

"Oh! I cannot wait for time. When a thing comes into my head, out it pops; and, by the way, what is become of Lord Mowbray?"

"Gone off with one of the sky-rockets, depend upon it," replied Mr. Altamont, "that's his way; and really, considering how very ill Lady Emily looks, I really think, my dear Mrs. Neville, you had better follow his example; we are the last in the circle, and if you make haste, your carriage will be the first up."

"Well, to be sure, that will be charming; I hate waiting. Come along, Lady Emily.—Poor

child! she does look tired; let us make haste; I love to be quick; there's not a moment to be lost,"—and away she went, heedless of all obstacles.

"Permit me, Lady Emily," said Mr. Altamont, giving his arm to her; when just as they arrived at the carriage-door, Lord Mowbray was waiting apparently to see them, for the instant they appeared, he came up to Lady Emily, and asked her permission to visit her next day.

"I am sure my uncle will be happy to see you," was her reply.

"Come along, child," cried Mrs. Neville; "do not stand talking there, my Lord Mowbray; I say, come into the carriage, we will set you home; and Mr. Altamont, we shall be all the better for your company; well, to be sure, I hate to be let down all of a sudden from the noise and crowd to a dead silence, it always makes me melancholy."

The gentlemen accepted the invitation; and Mr. Altamont observed that Lady Emily's roses had bloomed again with the blushing of the morning.

"There is something very refreshing," she said,

"in the pure air, after all the heat and smoke we have been breathing, which cannot fail of doing one good."

"Why, yes," rejoined Mr. Altamont, "I have a very doubtful opinion of any young lady who does not hail Nature and daylight with renewed delight after a night of dissipation. However, I believe all natural feelings get comfortably obtuse after a few London campaigns; but that is not your case yet, Lady Emily."

"No," she replied, "and I trust it never will be. At all events, I am sure you must have a decidedly good opinion of me at present, for I can very truly declare I am happier at this moment than I was during the whole evening."

She felt her eyes involuntarily attracted by those of her opposite companion, which were riveted on her, as she uttered these words; and she could not be ignorant of the language they spoke. A happy consciousness of reciprocity of sentiment supplied both with matter for silent but delightful thought, and scarcely were they sensible of the many good jokes of Mr. Altamont, and the observations of Mrs. Neville; so sweet, yet so confused a sensation of undefined and undefinable

interest floated through their being; nor was it till Lady Emily found herself in her room, that the sun shining brightly on a dead wall, and the noise of the early cries in the street, brought down her thoughts to that matter-of-fact state, which reverted to all the painful and incomprehensible events of the evening, from which, fatigued and worn out, she was glad to take refuge in sleep.

CHAPTER III.

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart,
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange,
Pride, fame, ambition to fill up his heart;
And few there are whom these can not estrange:
Men have all these resources, we but one;
To love again, and be again undone.

BYRON.

FROM the time that Lord Mowbray first made Mr. Altamont acquainted with his intimacy with the Rosalinda, the latter had taken that communication seriously to heart. As a really good and high principled man, he felt alarmed for the dignity of his friend, and was touched by the conduct and character, however faulty and erroneous, of the unhappy Italian. To the wisest head Mr. Altamont united the tenderest heart; and he was altogether

more completely engrossed by this story than he cared to allow. There was a person, indeed, who was so entirely identified with himself in every feeling of his being, so worthy of his confidence, that, for her, he could not have a secret. This person was his wife. On the present occasion, as on all others, they mutually consulted and commented upon what was best to be done for their young friend's honour and happiness; at the same time, no harsh or prejudiced sentiments were uttered against the interesting but imprudent individual, who, in forgetting what was due to herself as a woman and a responsible being endowed with reason, had by a misplaced devotion, which, thus erroneously indulged, is but a wretched idolatry, lost her happiness and endangered that of the person to whom she sacrificed her own.

Mr. and Mrs. Altamont, while they sought to find out what could best extricate Lord Mowbray from an entanglement in which his affections did not appear sufficiently involved to afford an excuse for making Rosalinda his wife, forgot not the compassion due to a woman who loved him with that entire self-abandonment of which women are alone capable.

At first, Mr. Altamont had thought (perhaps he had wished) to find that she was an interested, designing person; but the greater pains he took to sift her motives, and the more he observed her narrowly, the less he believed this; and he had himself too much truth of character, too much nobility of soul, to avail himself of such common-place unjust abuse, in order to detach Lord Mowbray entirely from her. But Mrs. Altamont, with that fine tact which belongs only to her sex, and with that quick and keen perception which supplies the place of more extensive knowledge of the world, which the opportunities of men afford to their stronger minds, had seen at a glance that the danger of Lord Mowbray's marrying Rosalinda no longer existed.

"Trust me," she said, "if ever I knew what love meant, and that I do know it, *you* at least will not deny,—Lord Mowbray's heart is for ever engaged. Lady Emily Lorimer will be his bride, or bride will he never take. I conceive, therefore, that it is not of him we need think; but, however romantic or foolish you may accuse me of being, my heart, I confess it, bleeds for that unhappy mistaken woman, who has made wreck of her own

felicity by giving the reins to an unrequited passion. If there is a sorrow upon earth which I commiserate, it is a woman's unrequited love. Think what conflicts must have been hers, ere she yielded to the slavery; what tortures of shame, of pride, and remorse! Whatever exaltation of imagination may, at times, make her glory in her debasement, there are others when she must be bowed and crushed beneath the weight of a self-contemning spirit. Delicacy and pride, the inherent principles of a woman's nature, are never violated with impunity. Poor, poor, Rosalinda! what will become of her?"

"Well, well, I feel for her too," replied the kind Mr. Altamont, with a tear trembling in his eye: "but charity begins at home; and our friend Lord Mowbray's honour and dignity must first be thought of; and if indeed he is, as you suppose, attached seriously to Lady Emily Lorimer, the very best thing he can do is to marry her as soon as possible."

"Ah! you men," sighed Mrs. Altamont, "how little do you think on the crushed and humbled heart, when the voice of situation and circumstances demands your attention!"

"Come, come, Fanny, this to me—I will not allow you to talk so." And the soft reproaches that ensued were made amends for, by the still softer pressure to the heart of wedded love.

Shortly after this conversation, a notice was put in the public papers, that, owing to indisposition, the Rosalinda had withdrawn her engagement from the stage, and forfeited her salary. What was to be done? was the ill-fated Italian to die in a strange land unaided? No! Mr. Altamont, not less prompt in decision than clear-sighted in counsel, determined to seek her out, engage her confidence, and if he found her worthy of consolation and assistance, to afford it to her by every means in his power. He was warmly seconded in this resolve by his wife, who with those tender feelings so peculiarly her own, urged the fulfilment of this kind determination with the sincerest interest.

After some trouble, Mr. Altamont discovered Rosalinda in an obscure lodging in Pimlico. The late beautiful creature, the admired of the multitude, was now a lone forsaken being, faded in beauty, evidently in reduced circumstances, and in the rapid and untimely decline of health and

strength. There was a simplicity in the dignity of Rosalinda's reception of him, which belongs in a peculiar manner to Italian women. With none of those factitious elegancies that characterize the French, nor the studied fascination practised by some other nations, they certainly possess a grace in their abandonment to Nature which supersedes all other feminine enchantment. It is the difference between a Grecian statue and an opera dancer; the drapery of an antique to the trimming of a milliner.

This failed not to produce its effect upon Mr. Altamont; and in some degree it abashed him. Conscious, however, of the integrity of his purpose, he ventured, after some apology, to hint that he was acquainted in part with her history; and that he feared from the circumstance mentioned in the popular newspapers of the day, that she might be reduced to require the assistance of a friend; and then he volunteered to become that friend in a tone and manner which could leave no doubt of his sincerity and no suspicion of his motive.

Rosalinda, with perfect frankness, acknowledged her gratitude at finding such an unexpected bless-

ing as a sympathizing friend in her hour of need; and while she declined all pecuniary assistance, gratefully accepted his proffered friendship.

Every time Mr. Altamont was in her society, he became more and more interested in her, and was mournfully convinced that he had no cause for apprehension as to the result of her influence over Lord Mowbray, since it was evident that a rapid decline was bearing Rosalinda quickly beyond this world's cares.—The conviction he felt of her purity of mind, notwithstanding her aberration from those rules of conduct which no woman can overpass or contemn without paying the price of lost happiness for their error, made him at length determine to take his wife to see her, and he could give no greater proof of the deep impression of interest with which she had inspired him.

The lonely and unhappy Italian seemed to revive under the consciousness of not being deemed unworthy of the attention of the good and pure of her own sex; for even those who have lost all title to such society, feel the bitterness of the pang which makes them tacitly acknowledge the justice of that sentence which deprives them of such association.

As Rosalinda's strength daily decreased, and she became aware herself that she could not long survive the rapid progress of her malady, she said one day to Mrs. Altamont—"Before I die, I must see Lord Mowbray once again." It was a sudden burst of feeling which made her utter these words, and having broken the seal which hitherto closed her lips in silence, she found a solace in frequently addressing her indulgent auditress on this theme, the engrossing object of her whole unhappy existence. At various intervals, stimulated by sudden impulses of feeling, Rosalinda laid open by degrees her whole life to Mrs. Altamont;—had these detached fragments been embodied in a continued narrative they would have told the following story:—After having confessed that sudden attachment to Lord Mowbray, the particulars of which have already been detailed, she declared that from the time she had become convinced he did not love her,—for "I call not by that name," she said, "the gentle and kindly sentiment with which he requited my devotion to him,—I formed but one plan, I looked forward but to one goal—it is that which I am now about to see realized, an early death! But I resolved

that during the time I sojourned upon earth I would always follow him wherever he went, breathe the same air, tread the same soil, and occasionally gaze upon those features which had been so fatal to me. For this sole purpose I followed him to England—for none other. I had no hope of being united to him. I would not have become his wife, convinced as I was, that compassion alone, and not love, would have obtained for me that boon. I had not been long in England, however, when I found my pecuniary resources were at an end. The distant relations to whom, by the terms on which I held them, my estates became forfeit so soon as I should live beyond a stipulated time out of Italy, took speedy advantage of the circumstance; stopped my rents, laid claim to my palaces and domains, and I found myself in a strange land, without even a single friend, on the eve of utter destitution. What could I do? to whom could I apply? to Lord Mowbray? ah! no,—sooner die than make known my situation to him; that he should *guess* I had followed him, I would bear; but that he should think I was persecuting

him by my presence, sueing to him for subsistence,—no, Rosalinda was not made for that.

"I thought then, for the first time, of the value of the talent with which nature and my native soil had endowed me, and offered myself as Prima Donna for the Opera House. My skill was approved, my voice commended; and I entered upon my new career with a feeling of proud independence, that those only can know, who, born to luxury and splendour, find themselves unexpectedly called upon to derive from their own exertions and self-resources those comforts and accessories to mere existence which, perhaps, are never known to be luxuries, or are never duly tasted as such, till we have felt what it is to lose them, or to purchase them by our own personal exertions. So long as my health was unimpaired, I fainted not under my lot, but gloried in it. I received a large salary. It sufficed me amply in the way in which I lived, and the situation I had chosen to fill was less painful to me than I had anticipated; for, knowing no one, and being unknown, I thought only of gaining the approbation of the public in my capacity of singer, and was totally

reckless of the various conjectures formed in respect to me. Often, when on the stage, the thought of one being alone inspired me; and I was so totally abstracted, though in presence of an immense multitude, that his image only appeared to fill the theatre; for him I sang, for him I felt, for him I poured forth my whole soul, and the people wondered—and while I was acting Medea, some of them said, 'She is, or must have been, truly mad,' and they were right—if love be madness. But I knew I had only felt what I expressed, and that I had not acted well, but suffered intensely—not thought of obtaining applause, but of giving utterance to the sentiments which were consuming me.

"When the Opera closed for the season, I learnt where Lord Mowbray resided, and to that neighbourhood I followed. I lived obscurely; no one thought of inquiring who I was, and all I wished was from time to time to see him as he passed my cottage window, or gave orders to his work people. In the anguish of this joy, I lived—I never attempted any employment—I never opened a book. What was all I had once taken delight in *now* to me? Music was dissonance; poetry, taste-

less; the long long days succeeded to each other in dread monotony; their sum was computed only by the few brief moments when I beheld him; and these moments I notched on a willow bough, which I kept for that purpose; it was at once my calendar and my emblem—a broken sapless branch, torn from its native stem, marked with love's destructive seal, a worthless, useless, melancholy thing.

"When Lord Mowbray quitted his castle, he went to Montgomery Hall, and I still followed. The report of the transcendent beauty of the Lady Lorimers reached even me, and the prescience of passion told me, that one of them was destined to become his bride. I cannot say why this belief should have added much to my wretchedness, for I had long before resigned every hope; yet at this conviction, the fever that was consuming me, burst with fresh fury in my veins, and I knew that death would, ere long, end my sufferings. I became more impatient than ever to see Lord Mowbray as frequently as possible; yet to do so, was infinitely more difficult than it had been at Mowbray Castle, as he seldom left the precincts of the Park; and without being recognised I could not

easily indulge my longing eyes with the only sight they wished to see.

"One day, as I was sauntering about in a lane, and devising means to gratify the desire I felt only to behold him at a distance, I met some gipsies, whom I immediately recognised as such from their resemblance to some of their caste whom I had seen in my own country. One girl of the name of Lushee particularly attracted me, for she read my fortune in my face, and told me I should die for love. I was grateful for the prophecy, and in return I gave her money. She asked me if there was any thing she could do for me. I told her she could serve me materially, by letting me disguise myself as one of her tribe, and take me to the Hall, so that I could see the persons living there without being seen. Lushee cast her glittering eyes about, as if in search of the means to comply with my request, and then promised to come to the cottage where I lived, and give me an answer.

"One night, she told me she could fulfil my bidding, and I had only to follow her in silence. I did so. We reached the park of Montgomery Hall. Lushee applied a key to one of the gates;

it opened, and admitted us; and she led me to the walls of the house. The shutters of the windows of one of the apartments were open. Lushee jumped upon a ledge that jutted out a few feet from the ground, and, looking in at that window, beckoned to me to do the same. I did so, and beheld Lord Mowbray and another gentleman:— for near an hour, I gazed at him. I could see the varying expression of his countenance, and every now and then I could catch the meaning of what his companion was saying to him. I sat absorbed in the contemplation of that countenance whose every turn and expression I had so often watched, and I fancied I could trace a feeling depicted on his features similar to that which I had seen when we met at Naples for the last time. A pang of self-reproach contracted his brow, and the melancholy half smile that played around his lips, seemed to imply that even in his mirth there was sadness. It was thus, at least, I interpreted the meaning of his look; when suddenly the violent ejaculation of the gentleman who was talking to him startled Lushee, and she uttered a slight shriek; at the same instant he turned round, and, seizing one of the candlesticks, hurled it furiously

at the window at which we were placed. Lushee dropped down to the ground with the quickness of lightning, and evaded the broken glass; and as the room was now in obscurity, she turned a lantern she held full upon them, and beheld the gentleman, who had just committed the violence, flinging about the furniture in a furious manner, right and left, which seemed to her so ridiculous that she laughed heartily, and the more she laughed, the more enraged he became. I entreated her to cease; and, to avoid detection, I took her by the arm, and we ran as fast as we could away.

"Often and often did I repeat these nocturnal visits; but afterwards I went alone, for I dared not trust the mirthful and mischievous Lushee. One other time, however, I had recourse to her for assistance. As I had learnt from her that Lord Mowbray was positively to marry one of the Lady Lorimers, I had an invincible longing to behold them; and Lushee, ever delighted to have an opportunity of exercising her ingenuity, soon gave me notice that she had obtained means, through the servants, to effect this. It was a weak curiosity,

I confess; it was a restless desire to identify myself with all that interested him even in the most painful and perhaps humiliating of all circumstances, that of forming an interest in and for the person from whose heart I was for ever to be banished.

"O! you—and all such as you, Mrs. Altamont, who, in the blessed bands of mutual and honourable love, see your duties and your affections walking on in the same undivided path, pity the wretched of your sex, who devote themselves to a man without the hope of a return of love; who voluntarily sacrifice themselves to a shrine, whose votive offerings are tears and pangs which bear them finally to the dishonour or the grave. But I linger, and please myself by dwelling on feelings which you cannot understand; for the same principle of love makes me find a sort of delight in my torture. I will hasten to the end of my disastrous history. I beheld the fortunate woman destined to be the bride of Mowbray. Lushee took me even into the bed-room of the beautiful sisters; but they awoke, and were terrified, supposing they saw something supernatural, and we fled, with difficulty escaping detection. From this time I never repeated these

wild and useless visits. I even quitted the neighbourhood, for I dared not trust myself longer in its precincts.

"I had now but one wish left, and kind Providence seemed to listen to my prayers. To appear in public—to exert my talents, was no longer possible to me. I resigned my engagement at the theatre, and with it the means almost of subsistence, for my remittances from abroad were irregularly paid, and were reduced to a sum wholly inadequate to the expenses of a sojourn in this country. Still I determined to die here, that my ashes might mingle in the soil which, as Lord Mowbray's country—

"You know the rest—you have soothed the latter moments of my days—for ever blessed may you be for having come to the aid of one, who was neglected, scorned, forlorn, and vilified; yes, my dear friends, you will be repaid for your generous kindness. To Lord Mowbray convey my last message, of never-failing love; I exonerate him from all design whatever to have brought me to this end; he meant nothing serious, nothing beyond admiration and kindness; but, oh! let your sex beware, my revered Mr. Altamont, of

that indulgence in the vanity of receiving the homage of ours, which in the world is esteemed at most a venial trespass, but which is often productive of indescribable wretchedness. Yet say not this to Lord Mowbray; say only that I died for love of him."

Mr. and Mrs. Altamont received her confidence with all the tender concern it merited; and they yielded to Rosalinda's last expressed wish of seeing Lord Mowbray once more before she died. For this purpose, Mr. Altamont set forth from Pimlico, with an aching heart, to seek his friend.

On the morning after the ball, at Roehampton, Lord Mowbray was indulging in the hope to which the previous evening's occurrences had given birth, and had almost screwed his courage to the sticking place, after having lulled certain remorse of conscience to rest: he was preparing to declare himself in due form to Lady Emily, when his servant announced Mr. Altamont. It required all Lord Mowbray's self-command to prevent the peevish *not at home* from being uttered in the face of his friend.

Mr. Altamont entered the room at the same

moment, and mistaking the sudden action of Lord Mowbray's darting to the door, for a kindly greeting, cordially seized hold of his hand. The action so little corresponded with Lord Mowbray's present feelings, that he could not conceal the awkwardness he felt.

"You were going out, my dear Lord; at another time I should have apologised for my intrusion, and have taken the more than hint which is conveyed in the expression of your countenance; but as it is, allow me to say I must detain you. I have a long and somewhat sad story to tell, but nevertheless it must be told; and, after what I observed last night, it is perhaps the very moment when it had best be told:

'It's good to be merry and wise;
It's good to be just and true;
It's good to be off wi' the auld love,
Before ye be on wi' the new.'

Now it is of this I am come to talk to you: poor Rosalinda is dying!"

Lord Mowbray turned pale.

"Rosalinda dying!—tell me not so. Let me go instantly to her."

"Be collected, my dear Lord; do not hurry into

her presence till she is prepared to see you. Every necessary aid her present exigencies require, has been procured for her: there is no need for this sudden ebullition of feeling; but there *was* great need of some recollection of what was due to a woman, who in the hour of her prosperity had sacrificed every thing to you."

"Altamont, I can bear a great deal from you," said Lord Mowbray rising; "but this I cannot endure. You take advantage of a confidence I reposed in you to upbraid me unjustly. Pray how was I to know that Rosalinda was reduced to poverty and distress? were you not the first to counsel me to avoid her? did you not frequently and forcibly represent to me how unfitting it was that I should continue an intimacy with a person too good to be sacrificed to a mere fancy, yet wholly unfitting to become my wife? and if in following your advice and losing sight of her, I have been left in total ignorance of her distress, do I deserve so severe a rebuke?"

"What, is it possible that the Rosalinda has never applied to you for assistance, never made known her pitiable condition to you?"

"Never!"—

"No, I know she has not; for I have become accidentally intimate with her, and she has confided her secret to me; I only asked the question to bring more forcibly home to you the magnanimity of her conduct. She is, I must say it, a very extraordinary person; and my heart is truly touched at her misfortunes; but they are fast drawing to a close; she has but a few hours in all probability to live; yield to her last wish, and come with me to see her once more ere she leaves this world and its sorrows!"

Lord Mowbray passed his arm through Mr. Altamont's, and without uttering a word walked away with him. It must be owned that the sacrifice of a present desire to the fulfilment of a duty of gratitude was a sacrifice; but still he would have loathed himself could he have acted otherwise. Nevertheless, the idea that Lady Emily was expecting him, perhaps blaming him for not coming after the events of the preceding evening; accusing him, it might be, of conduct of the very same nature which he had already practised in his intercourse with another, was an idea which almost distracted him.

When he entered the humble lodging in which

Rosalinda resided, he pressed his hand on his forehead and groaned as he murmured inaudibly—"Is this an abode for her who dwelt in palaces?—where are her orange gardens, her fountains, her flowers, her numerous train of attendants and adorers?" And then he spake aloud and said,—"is she come to this?"

"Ay," cried Mr. Altamont; "and a fortunate event for her that she is come to *this*. I wish you had seen the wretchedness from which it pleased Providence that it should have been my lot to rescue her."

Mr. Altamont then related all that he knew of her since that time, and of his wife's friendly and even tender interest in her, till Lord Mowbray's whole soul was racked with remorse and anguish. A consciousness of self-reproach smote him with the goading remembrance that when Rosalinda was in prosperity and living in a country where she was honoured and loved, he had basked in the sunshine of her destiny; he had enjoyed the gratification of her society, till something of a tenderer nature stole over his being, and it was not till he came to England and recollected that he might forget, in this indulgence, his station in English

life, his advantages in rank and society, that he withdrew from her presence entirely; that he estranged himself totally from her acquaintance, and had never seen her but to fly from her as though she had been a pestilence; and what greater pestilence can there be than the secret sense of having wronged a helpless, defenceless, devoted woman!

In vain Lord Mowbray laid "the flattering unction to his soul" that he had never sought her love; and that accident had brought them together; that she courted him in a way impossible to withstand; that he had ever honoured and respected her. Still, still, he felt he ought never to have allowed an appearance of attachment on his part to lead her into an illusion so fatal to her peace: that which was play to him was death to her. He acknowledged all this now, when it was too late, and paid the price of error with a bitter pang.

Rosalinda's death-bed was a scene of deep and impressive awe; but it was calm and resigned. She took leave of Lord Mowbray as a friend, but never reproached or upbraided him. She ascribed her early death to the climate, and to too much exertion; and, in the warmest terms of gratitude, she acknowledged her obligation to Mr. and

Mrs. Altamont. When Lord Mowbray was overcome with grief and yielded to a burst of sorrow which could not be suppressed, she besought him to let their last meeting, like their first, be one of brightness.

"Retain of me," she said, addressing him, "only a gentle and soft remembrance. I would not have any harsh or bitter thought mingle in the recollection you may cherish of me."

Her final adieus were equally calm, touching, and dignified; and she then composed her mind to those great duties which alone can bring peace at the last.

Lord Mowbray and Mrs. Altamont were in the house till Rosalinda's soul had fled; and then Lord Mowbray gave unrestrained course to his feelings. He ordered every respect to be paid to the remains of one who had been so truly devoted to him; and, hastily leaving London, he retired to Mowbray Castle, where he saw no one, and passed the winter in solitude and sorrow. When the recollection of Lady Emily, and of his own apparently cruel rudeness of behaviour towards her, added a pang to all those which he already endured, he thought he had forfeited all chance of happiness. The reflections which arose out of

the late striking event, did more towards forming his character to true worth than many years of life unmarked by self-knowledge. But the bitterness of a reproaching conscience, and the regret he experienced, nevertheless faded with time into a gentler view of the subject; and under the sentiment that remained, lurked a tide of fond remembrance for Lady Emily, as the current of a stream may sometimes be seen through the ice that covers its surface. He mourned unfeignedly the fate of Rosalinda; he lamented his own self-indulgence which betrayed her to her ruin; but the image of Lady Emily stole like a sunbeam through the shade, and brought back peace to his heart. He secretly vowed to make amends, in as far as he could do so, for his past conduct, and determined to redeem his errors.

When the spring-time returned once more, the whole remembrance of his first interview with Lady Emily returned also; and though he thought and said she must long ago have forgotten that such a being as himself existed, still he wished to prove the dreaded truth. How to do this, he knew not: he had lived in such total seclusion for many months, that he had not even heard her named; and he had but too much

reason to suppose, that both the General and more particularly herself, must have discarded him from the list of their acquaintance.

With this impression, he left his Castle to seek General Montgomery and ascertain the fact. As he passed through Bristol, he happened to see from a window General Montgomery's servant, Edwards, pass by. How the sight of any person or thing the most distantly connected with a beloved object vibrates on every chord of feeling! He seized his hat; pursued the man till he overtook him; satisfied himself on the chief points he wanted to know, and prepared to act accordingly

CHAPTER IV.

Many are the sayings of the wise
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience, as the truest fortitude.
. . . . . .
But with the afflicted, in his pangs, their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above;
Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.

PARADISE REGAINED.

Two letters from Lady Emily to Miss Macalpine, written a few weeks after the departure of the latter for Scotland, will best relate the incidents which followed that period.

The first letter was dated from London, and ran as follows:—

"My dear Alpinia—We have not yet left town, though our departure is fixed. I should be very happy, or at least content, were it not for the melancholy which I see preys on my uncle, and which all my efforts seem unable to dispel; but I promised to give you a succinct account of all that happens, and in the first place, of my sister's wedding.

"Oh, Alpinia, what an awful ceremony is a marriage! I cried my very heart out; and provoked Frances, and was stared at by the company: only Lord Bellamont seemed to commiserate my agitation. I did what I could, however, to master my feelings, and in some degree I succeeded. If all weddings were like that one, certainly they are more calculated to inspire sorrow than joy. Every body was so stiff, so demure, so ceremonious, so unlike my ideas of affectionate interest and kindly good will; and then the ceremony took place in a drawing room, like a sort of courtly exhibition—not in a church—not as it were under the auspices of Heaven. It was a cold, calculating, civil contract. Yet Frances accounted herself a happy bride; and she was accounted so by others. The whole thing was

splendid; it was a magnificent show. But oh, Alpinia! I never can describe what I felt—a heavy gloom seemed to hang over every part of the ceremony.

"Poor Lord Bellamont, with his kind affectionate manner he looked so anxious to please, yet so diffident of success. He seemed to wish to inspire Frances with his own open and generous warmth of disposition: but she checked him, evidently; and once I heard her say, 'We are not at a country wake.'—'Would that we were,' thought I, 'we should then be a happier set of people!'

"My uncle gave Frances away; and when the rites were performed she came up to salute him. He blessed her with his sweet voice, and said, 'Remember, my dear child, the duties of the station you have entered upon: they are manifold; and in your fulfilling this great responsibility well, depends your happiness here and hereafter.' Frances listened with an impatient air; and I heard her whisper Lady Arabella—'When all this is over we shall manage well enough; but it must be confessed this is mighty tiresome.—Did you ever——?'

"At length it *was* over, and the bride and bridegroom having changed their dress, and taken a formal leave of the company, departed for their villa at Richmond. Shortly after, the rest of the company dispersed; and it was a relief to me when I found myself once more alone with my uncle. There had been a sort of condescending affability displayed on the part of the Duke of Godolphin to my uncle, which I felt must be painful to him; and as we drove from the door, he said to me, closing his eyes as you know is his wont when any thing agitates him with pain or pleasure—'I have done now with this idle farce for ever.'—'What, my dear uncle,' I ventured to say, although a reverential respect made me put the question timidly, 'what do your words imply?' —'Oh, nothing, my dearest and best, but that I shall henceforward live to myself, and to her who is so truly my own child in heart, that I feel her to be a part of myself; but the world, the heterogeneous mass of the heartless and the vain who pursue the things of this life as though they could last for ever; of these, my Emily, and all such as these, I have taken my final adieu.' 'Dearest uncle,' I said, 'you make me melan-

choly—not that I lament the gaieties of a town-life, for I can be happy any where; but I lament to see that your former cheerfulness has forsaken you: might I not venture to ask the cause? not from curiosity but from heartfelt interest.' '*You* may do any thing, my Emily; but the seat of my sorrow lies too deep for removal. Two things alone remain for me: religious resignation and the grave. They may and *will* bring peace; but joy on earth is not to be my portion more.' 'Dear, dear uncle, say not so, I beseech you,'—and I burst into tears. He rejoined, 'Well, my best comforter, my earthly treasure, you are still left me. I ought to be grateful. Emily,' he continued, 'I charge you never let us renew this conversation.' He pronounced these last words so solemnly, that my blood seemed to run cold.

"There is then a subject on which we are never to touch, a bound we are never to overpass, a barrier to free communication. What a change does this fatal prohibition not produce in my relation with my ever honoured uncle! And oh! Alpinia, if you knew all I have heard, you would pity me; but to no human being can I mention this terrible secret. I am strong in the confidence that the

dark inuendo which met my ear is a false and base aspersion; but I have too much reason to believe it is not unknown to my uncle, and it is undermining the very springs of his existence. Why does he not shake it off at once? why does he not disperse the pestilential vapour which poisons his existence? But enough—too much: Alpinia, my heart is overcharged, or I should not have allowed myself to express my feelings; I know it is my duty to suffer in silence.

"Two days after Frances's wedding, my uncle asked me to walk out with him; I obeyed with alacrity. This request brought back the remembrance of former days; we walked on in silence through the streets—a silence I was not inclined to break, as there was something in my uncle's manner which prevented my asking him any questions; at length I ventured to say, 'My dear Sir, I am sadly afraid you will be fatigued.'—'We have not far to go now,' was his reply; and we reached Westminster Bridge. Here he called to a waterman, and having procured a boat, we stepped into it. The busy Thames, the noise of the town, and the rude voices of those who were plying their various craft on the river—the dome of

St. Paul's dimly seen in the distance, and the nearer spires of Westminster Abbey, created a medley of thoughts and feelings which were not in unison with the interest that absorbed me. I wished I had never seen those sights, or heard those sounds. I seemed to connect all that I had ever known of pain or trouble with them, and they were distasteful to me. As I sat in the boat, thus lost in a variety of sensations by my uncle's side, he took my hand and said, 'Now, dearest Emily, once more reflect ere you decide irrevocably. You are going with an aged man to a life of seclusion, and, when contrasted with your former existence, of comparative hardship. You may yet avoid this; you may continue to dwell in the sunshine of prosperity and the lap of luxury; but if you follow my fortunes, you will, even young and lovely as you are, probably be forgotten, and may spend the flower of your youth unnoticed. In tending the declining days of your old uncle, you may, and probably will, lose all the advantages of worldly prosperity and consideration which a different mode of existence might secure you. I am selfish, I fear, in allowing you to make this sacrifice; and at least I must once more represent to

you, in true colours, the nature of the choice you have made.

"'Do not,' I said, interrupting him, 'do not, I beseech you, wrong me by supposing for a moment that any thing can make me desert you. The more wretched, the more forsaken you are by the world, the more I will endeavour to make you forget such an unworthy world, and such undeserved sorrow; and I can only simply assure you, that in living with you under any circumstances, I am fulfilling the natural impulse of my heart; whereas, away from you, nothing could make me happy.'—'You will not go,' rejoined my uncle, 'to an elegant retirement, where books and flowers, and the mental luxuries of life, create a never-failing spring of enjoyment to minds such as yours, trained by habit as well as taste to derive pleasure from the resources they afford; but you will live in a habitation devoid of outward charm, where the bare necessaries of life are maintained by frugal economy, and where the occupation of the mind is merely how to exist. We are not about to live in any region of romantic beauty, where the fancy is excited by scenery or romance so as to make it forget privation, or delight in solitude;

but we go to the plain monotony of an English country habitation, devoid of those luxuries which have become by use mere necessaries, to the presence of which you are unconscious, but to whose absence you will be painfully alive; and to the tame aspect of common nature in her least beautiful garb. Can you endure this weighty pressure of existence? Oh! my Emily, look well at the contrast. With your sister, wealth and pleasure will surround you; the persons you will see are of a rank and situation in life suitable to your own; some one among the number may even be worthy of you, and you will have a fair opportunity of making such an alliance as will secure these advantages to you for life. Pause and reflect, I entreat you, on this alternative;—can you forego these advantages, and embrace these certain hardships, with all their future contingencies of privation.'

"With alacrity and cheerfulness did I reply, 'Since I am to exist with you and for you, indeed, my dearest uncle, you know not the boundless satisfaction I feel, in thinking that at last I shall be useful to you. At last I shall be able to prove the gratitude I feel for the care and love you

have bestowed on me.' 'My blessed Emily, it is enough! Why should I teaze you with farther doubts? Heaven has left me one incalculable blessing in leaving me yourself. It were impiety to its mercy to question you farther; my dear, dear child, you will be rewarded for this generous devotion—that is my best consolation in dragging you down to the level of my fallen fortunes. And now, my Emily, listen to the arrangements I have made, in order to avoid the unpleasant circumstances to which our mode of departure from London would otherwise have subjected us. I have hired apartments in an obscure inn in Westminster for a few nights, and thence we can proceed unobserved to the place of our destination.'

"This was perhaps the only part of my uncle's communication which seriously pained me. I had expected a visit from Lord Mowbray—he had led me to expect it; and as we had at the Roehampton fête been witnesses to a scene, or rather hearers of a conversation which was most painfully interesting to me, I did think that he would not leave London without coming, as he had promised, to speak to me on that subject; but now that we have removed clandestinely, no

one knows whither,—that my uncle has only left his one faithful servant, Edwards, to settle every thing in Sackville Street, and charged him on no account to divulge the secret,—I feel certain that I shall see Lord Mowbray no more; and the idea that I shall not have it in my power to remove any unfavourable impression that he might have received regarding my uncle, cut me to the heart. I cannot, however communicate this feeling to the latter, and I endeavour to conceal from him the disappointment I experienced.

"Adieu, my dear Alpinia:—our destination is (as my uncle informs me) the neighbourhood of Bristol. We set off to-morrow; and, as soon as possible after our arrival, you shall hear again, and most minutely, from your ever affectionate

"EMILY LORIMER."

The second letter was dated from Bentley Farm, Somersetshire.

"My dear Alpinia—We are at length happily settled in our new abode.—But I shall resume my narrative where I left off in my last.

"During the two days we remained at the inn,

I confess I indulged a vague kind of expectation —I cannot call it hope—hope is far too bright a thing for so colourless a vision; still the indistinct form of pleasurable feeling hovered around me; but when one lowering rainy morning we set out to go, I knew not whither, outcasts at it seemed, from home and friends, with a gloomy mystery attached to us, my heart died within me. I looked in my uncle's face, that dear face which for so many years I had ever seen reflecting the serenity of his soul; but it was now pale and fixed, in an expression of melancholy which I knew it was beyond my power to change. I felt the more how much it was my duty to conceal my own feelings, and this very knowledge increased the difficulty of my task; but I thought of applying to that high source of all comfort, which never fails those who truly seek it, and I gradually looked beyond the present moment, and experienced that renovating sense of satisfaction which is sometimes even the blessed handmaid of sorrow.

"When we reached the open country, the dense atmosphere of London no longer enveloped every object in its deadening shroud. The trees, even

in their leafless state, were to me not devoid of beauty; the formation of the branches, their various barks, and occasionally the green and glossy ivy that crept around them; the many-coloured browns of the fallen leaves of the hedges; the bramble, that despised but beautiful child of humble nature, with its plaited leaves of varied dies, sometimes vivid scarlet, sometimes yellow, sometimes of a rich purple, were all well-known and well-loved acquaintances, that gave me back my own natural feelings; and I recognized them, in going slowly along, as so many assurances that there exist a thousand resources of entertainment and reflection in what is called the most common of things—common! what can properly deserve that epithet of all the works of creation? None surely; they are all replete with infinite wisdom. Who that regards them as they deserve to be regarded, can for a moment doubt the power and goodness of their Creator, or feel themselves hopeless?

"Such were the thoughts that gradually restored my mind to its native tone of healthful serenity; and by the time we were thirty miles from town, I insensibly found myself talking

with animated cheerfulness to my uncle, and was repaid for the effort I had made, by observing that he actually listened to me with a pleased attention; and if I could not remove altogether the heavy weight which oppressed him, I certainly did alleviate and lighten its burthen.

"When we found ourselves in a small comfortable parlour in the inn at Murell Green, and that Edwards brought in our few things, stirred up the fire, and saw us settled with our respective books before us, and conversing with apparent cheerfulness, he stopped a moment at the door, and said,—'who'd hae thought it?—but thank God!'—Many times before the supper was brought in, this faithful domestic made excuses to come into the room; sometimes it was to know how my uncle chose his bed made, sometimes to ask if he would not draw off his boots and put on his slippers, sometimes to know if he could be of no service to my Ladyship. 'I am but a sorry lady's-maid,' he said;—'Oh that ever we should come to this!' and he dashed a tear from his cheek.

"I was touched by this proof of feeling, but grieved at its expression, because I saw my uncle's

countenance darken into despondency; and for the rest of the evening he did not recover any degree of cheerfulness.

"On the morning we arrived at Bristol, there was a heavy fall of snow, and we remained at our inn without moving out. The next day was bright and sunshiny; and as our remaining journey to our new abode was very short, I ventured to propose a walk to see the town. I thought it might serve to take off my uncle's thoughts from their own melancholy contemplations; and you know my insatiable love of seeing localities and knowing their history is such, that I would take a great deal of trouble, and find pleasure in the trouble too, to gratify my curiosity in this respect. I assure you, Bristol repays one for one's pains. Besides its claim to attention as a great commercial city, it is full of minor matters of interest. The remaining bits of Elizabethan architecture are in the best taste of English fashion. There are door-ways, and architraves, and arches which well deserve to be preserved from decay; and it is a pity that some artist does not save them from oblivion.

"The magnitude of the town, its excellent mas-

sive dwelling-houses, its busy streets and opulent inhabitants, tell of the great source of England's wealth, and, as Florence did of old, exalt its merchants to the grade and state of Princes. Yet the bustle of trade does not convey to me any feeling of real exhilaration; there is something in that money-getting, bartering, gold-making activity, which is rather depressing. And for what is all this stir, this wonderous anxiety? for gold, and more gold still; not to add to enjoyment either for self or others, but to gratify the insatiable longing for more and more wealth; and when I am told, but this in itself is enjoyment, I recoil from the information,—I cannot believe it—it is the unsatisfactory restless passion of some demoniacal agency, not the dignified repose and delight of a being ultimately intended for those regions, 'where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.'

"Such were my feelings, dear Alpinia, as my uncle and I paced the thronged streets of Bristol; and then all those vessels coming and going, bearing away many from all they loved, to seek—for death, it may be, in unwholesome climes, or 'the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth!' How

my sick heart shrunk inward to rest upon other things!

"We left Bristol about twelve o'clock, and every turn of the carriage-wheel awoke an unexpected delight; for the country we came to, was one whose features were unlike any I had seen; and, even under the unfavourable aspect of frost and snow, was fraught with a character of sublimity which I had never before beheld. The ascent to Clifton was precipitous; and when we reached its summit, the eye wandered over a vast expanse of country, richly intersected with long lines of wood, and here and there a single tree stood out like a pillar giving relief to the distance. The ground too was finely broken, and some picturesque pieces of rock lifted up their dark forms amid the snow, appearing darker still from the contrasted whiteness around them; but the striking part of the scenery lay to the left, where the Avon winds between the narrow rocks; a feature which has been likened to the Vale of Tempe. On one side, covered with wood; on the other, bare, bold, and precipitous. The line of the horizon is high, and, in the clear atmosphere of frost,

was drawn like a brilliant blue zone around the landscape.

" I was enchanted, and expressed myself so to my dear uncle, who pressed my hand and said I made him young again. But the fact is, that he is peculiarly alive to impressions of grandeur or of beauty, whether of nature or art, and requires no impulse to be given him save that of his own mind. We continued our way over this high region, for about four or five miles, the road gradually becoming more rugged; and then, turning off to the right, descended into a wooded ravine, from whence we again emerged and re-ascended. Half-way up a steep acclivity, a large rambling low farm-house was seen; part of it was old, with clustering stack chimneys and pointed windows; the rest, of more modern aspect. A farm-yard lay on one side, a wood on the other. At the door of this house, the carriage stopped.

" ' Here we are,' said my uncle, with a heavy sigh. ' Oh! what a beautiful view!' I exclaimed; and in fact nothing could be finer; we looked over extensive woods belonging to some great domain below us, on to the Bristol Channel,

where the white sails were glittering like diamonds on the sea; and if there was a loneliness in the frost-covered waste around us, there was a grandeur in it not devoid of charm. 'How happy we may be here!' I said, helping my uncle to alight, while several of the farm dogs came barking and frisking around us, as though to welcome us; for in these delightful animals there are testimonies of courtesy or the reverse, easily distinguished by those who read them aright, and are accustomed to their language. A very clean-looking old woman stood in attendance, whose genuine country manners prepossessed me in her favour. She ushered us along a passage broad enough to admit of various implements of husbandry, arranged in an orderly manner on the ground on either side; and above these, various herbs were hung up to dry; the wainscoted walls of unpainted walnut-wood were carefully kept of their original colour, save that time had mellowed them, and the huge beams which supported the roof, were rather ornamental than otherwise. The end of this passage opened into a large room; an immense chimney-piece, the pyramidal form of which reached half-way up the

roof, surmounted a fireplace, where a fire was burning brightly with ample logs of wood, and the floor of this apartment was so shining and bright that it reflected the joyous blaze in a long line of dancing light. Some rude medallions of coloured plaister, decorated or rather disfigured the panelling of the walls; and to the huge beam that ran across the roof and seemed to give security to the vaulted chasm above, were appended several bundles of flax, some spindles, and other symbols of good housewifery. A range of high-backed chairs, elaborately worked in tent stitch, whose piony roses, albeit a little faded, still bore testimony to the taste and industry of the dames of former days, were arranged in comely row around the apartment; and two, much larger than the rest, were placed on either side the chimney. One immense table seemed immoveably fixed in the middle of the room, and one other occupied half the side of it under a window of unusually large dimensions, in which some remains of painted glass still decorated the upper casements.

"'What capabilities there are here for comfort!' I exclaimed. 'Only a few sofas and books,

and flowers, and this room would be enchanting; and look here, dear uncle, here are two cabinets of such a shape and such material as one might wish were one's own.' These were fine massive presses of carved wood that stood in recesses by the chimney. I opened the doors of one of them, and saw the lower shelves filled with household linen and piles of yarn to make more; while on the upper, were a few books; exactly those kind of dingy, respectable, antiquated outsides, which promise so much pith and marrow within.

"Nor was I mistaken. First, lay on its side the Family Bible, with large silver clasps; then, as worthy of the neighbourhood, there were arranged by its side, Boston's 'Crook in the Lot,' Lewis Bayley's 'Practice of Piety,' Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying,' and Baxter's 'Saints' Rest.' Some of these I had read before. You remember, Alpinia, while I used to sit at work under the beech-trees at dear Montgomery Hall, you used to read to me that beautiful, poetical, sublime, and pious book, the 'Holy Living and Dying.' The others I felt sure must be worthy of perusal, as they were in such good com-

pany; for books of the same sort, like persons of the same pursuits, generally congregate together, although profane hands or ill chance may occasionally part or mismatch them.

"My uncle smiled at the delight I expressed, and then with a serious sweetness added, though it seems vain to repeat his praise of myself, 'The virtuous find friends every where, and my Emily is of these. We have indeed great cause of thankfulness.' My heart responded to this acknowledgment.

"And now came in Edwards, with all the busy bustling of his affectionate service, as if he tried to make up by noise and activity for the lack of that numerous train with which he had been accustomed to see my uncle surrounded: 'Will you not please, Sir, to look at your apartments above stairs? The beds seem very good, though the walls are rather dingy, and Mrs. Bentley keeps on rousing fires, and I hope your Honour and my Lady will catch no cold.' 'Go, Emily, love,' said my uncle, 'and report to me how you are lodged; I am too old a soldier to care about *my* room.'

"I was agreeably surprised to find two rooms

very like the one below, only lower in the roof, separated by a passage, and containing, as Edwards said, very clean-looking beds; the curtains of which were of a thick, white linen cloth, worked all over with parrots and green leaves and cherries in bright coloured worsteds, probably the same hand which had produced the chairs below. Large oaken chests afforded convenience either for holding clothes or as seats; for of chairs there were but two, and they were not of the most inviting shape or substance. One mirror, much defaced by flies and time, pended in such a manner from the wall as to reflect dimly the top of the head; and one table of the same dimensions as those below stairs, stood beneath it. Such was my toilette; not quite like that which I had been accustomed to at the Hall; but I quickly formed plans of improvement in the materials before me for constituting a more comfortable arrangement the next day; and altogether, I was agreeably surprised in the sort of abode which my uncle had taught me to expect, as being far more eligible than he had represented it to be. I was happy to find, in the room destined for him, a very easy chair,

and I had brought his favourite footstool and a large velvet cushion, which I immediately placed in their respective stations; a piece of carpet too, that used to be under his writing-table, Edwards had not forgotten; and these minor objects of his accustomed comforts directly gave an air of old acquaintanceship to the apartment, with which I was sure he would feel pleased.

"Edwards and myself soon arranged all these matters; and I had the consolation of knowing that my uncle could not experience any personal inconvenience, or suffer in health, from the change he was now to undergo, in as far at least as outward circumstances went. You know, Alpinia, how he overvalues all that I do, and you may be sure these little attentions were not lost upon him.

"Such was our abode when we first entered it three weeks ago. It has gradually assumed a more luxurious appearance; for my piano and my uncle's flute have arrived, and several other pieces of furniture from Bristol, with many books; so that really, except that the Bentley Farm, as it is called, is not the Hall, I do not see what we could desire more in point of local

comfort; but I will confess to you, nevertheless, that now the first business and bustle of arrangement have subsided, the calm into which we have sunk is not without its melancholy. Do what we may—turn, as one will, sorrow, I see, cannot be avoided altogether—perhaps it is not intended it should; I have been hitherto so happy, too happy! I did not know there could be any change; but the change is come. My dear uncle's countenance—that is the changed aspect which affects me most. There is some secret sorrow preying on him—else why should he have left his dearly loved home? and though I try to forget this, in order that I may be the better enabled to cheer him, still it is a consciousness which will not be expelled.

"The other night, as I sat by my uncle at work, I heard him sigh heavily, and then he arose and paced the room till he almost made me (who never knew what nerves were) grow nervous. The creaking of his shoes, the shuffling of his steps along the shining boards—how they irritated me! I wished to engage him in conversation, yet I felt that I had not a pleasant word to say; at last, I ventured to pronounce a wish that Colonel

Pennington were with us, and began planning the possibility of finding room to lodge him. 'Ah, my dear one!' said my uncle, with a look of distress that pained me to the soul, 'I am sure you feel this loneliness is too much for you.' In vain, with my cheerful accents did I endeavour to dispel this idea. I saw it had gained possession of him, and the knowledge that his own feelings made him a stranger to mine, was a real trial to me. Fortunately, there are two little children, grandchildren to the proprietor of the farm, whom I have taken under my charge, and their innocent play makes a diversion to my uncle's thoughts, which is less intensely interesting to him than dwelling always upon me, and yet amuses and soothes him. I talked to him the other day of the returning spring, and of the delight I should have in tending the garden, and seeking for his favourite violets:—but, alas! every subject that I touch upon, has a reference to the past; and when I endeavour to avoid one thorn, I stumble on another.

"Frances has only written once to us since her marriage. She says she is very happy, and gives a splendid account of the gaieties at Belmont

Castle. But I look in vain, for one word which would communicate a real feeling of happiness to my heart.

" This letter comes through my uncle's agent in town, to whom all his letters are directed; and as he does not wish his abode to be known, he desires me not to mention it, except to yourself. You will not therefore, if you please, speak or write of it to any person, which, but for this notice, you might accidentally have done.

" Write to me, and tell me every minute particular of your loved Heatherden. Your health, and all that concerns you, will interest me. My days are never long enough for the employments I have to fill them with, though I believe there is time enough, as well as a time for all things under the sun, did we so regulate our pleasures and duties as to give them their proper portions of attention; but we run on with one thing till it has usurped the due place of another; and thus it is, we say we have no time.

" I am sure of one thing, which is—that so long as God gives me health and my senses, I shall always find time to love and think of those most dear to me, among whom, my dear Alpinia,

believe me you hold a chief place, for I am, in all sincerity, your very affectionate

"EMILY LORIMER."

Miss Marian Macalpine, in answer to the foregoing:—

"My dear young leddy and friend—It was a heart's gladdening to me to see your hand o' writ, for I thought lang to hae tidings o' you and my honoured General. Praised be the Lord, that though ye 're under the cloud, there is no' that man, leeving nor dead, wha ever did or could, say aught against either o' ye, in *truth*:—Juke and let the jaw gae by and ye 'll rise the prouder frae the deep waters o' ill men's tongues; no' a bit but it gies me a heart scad when I think o' the gude and the great being dispossessed o' their ain lands and tenements, while the ill-doing and the new-fangled ride it owr their heads: but ye hae the true Christian spirit, my dear Lady Emily; and thole the dule o' this warld wi' the meekness o' a weaned bairn. Doubtless ye 'll no' can miss ye 're reward.

"My Lady Frances's bridal must hae been a

fine galantee show, and she 'll hae a gude tocher, and gin she conducts hersel' wise-like in the high station she has chosen, there's nathing to be said. 'Bode a gown o' gowd, and ye 'll get a sleeve o't,' they say; she has done that same, and has gotten sleeves and tail and a'. He's a douce discreet lad, the Lord Bellamont, and seems on every haund likely to mak' her a gude husband; but Lady Frances was ever ta'en up wi' her ain beauty, and that's a thing winna bide, and afttimes lang ere it's awa, the flush and glamer o't is clean gane. Och hone! dautie, the beauty o' youth is like the sough o' the simmer wind, so that for the wear and tear o' every-day use, it 's o' little price.

"Really, Lady Emily, your account o' Bentley Farm was sae exact-like, that I could fancy mysel' sitting aside ye. Hech, sirs! gin I'd but the penny siller, I'd soon mak' out that same visit; but though, thanks to Lord Mowbray, I'm a rich woman, biding in my ain bounds, I should soon no' hae a sark to my back, if I gaed wandering up and down the countrie side; but why canna ye come owr the muir among the heather, to bonnie Heatherden?—O! for a sight o' the General's winsome countenance, and your ain canty smile!

I'd wager ony thing the General would soon cease to be sae glum and melancholious-like, for there's no denying but changes are lightsome; and then there's no better cure for an ailing than to keep aye moving. The vera bustle and stramash o' a flitting, gars the bluid tingle again.

"I had sair work whan I cam' first till this place; forby, a' the thoughts o' lang syne which cam' owr me like spirits o' the departed. No' a bit but I thought I heard the auld Lady Mowbray's voice craick, craiking in my lug, 'Marian, whaure's my pillow? Marian, whaure's my bag? Why are ye no' at the spinning o' the wearifu' booming-wheel?' Mony a saut tear has it gar'd me greet, whan I'd far rather been out and after the blackberries or the rowan berries—or seeking the lintwhite and the cushie doo's nest. And now, now that my time's my ain, what use do I mak' o't? Keep me, but we're pitifu' creturs at the vera best—girning at ae time for what we canna tell how to use at anither—shouldna this teach us to keep a calm seugh in our heads? Ye can weel conceive, my sweet Lady Emily, how sair a pang it cost me to part frae you and yours—and then it was an unco' tryal to come to thae parts. The

days o' our youth! the days o' our youth! Had we a grip o' them back again, how different-like wad we use them; at least, so we think:—but wha can hinder the wind to blaw?—youth winna be guided. Yet this is no language for you:—troth and it sets you ill, my bonnie birdie, wha hae taen tent in youthfu' prime; and whan years hence, gin ye be spared, ye'll backward cast your ee, there 'll be no girnings o' conscience to rive your heart.

"Weel, aweel! here I am, wha hae outlived a' my ain kith and kin, and am my leefu' lane in this wearifu' warld! Yet still I hae mony blessings; and so lang as life's left, doubtless there is aye a meaning in 't. That 's what we ought to luke to:—pit a stout heart till a stey brae—and that will brake the neck o' a' our troubles. I pray for that same; and that every blessing may be showered upon the honest General, and your sweet sel', is the very hearty prayer o' your friend,

"MARIAN MACALPINE.

CHAPTER V.

For what admir'st thou? what transports thee so?
An outside? fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love:
Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself;
Then value; ofttimes nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well-managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head.

PARADISE LOST.

SOON after Lord Bellamont's marriage with Lady Frances, they went from Richmond to Godolphin Castle, where the Duke and a gay party of Lady Arabella's friends, as she called the fashionable group of idlers as assembled in that luxurious abode, were awaiting the bride's arrival, as the Queen of the Revels, and the dame of all fashion *to be*, for the ensuing season in London. Here, then, opened the very first scene on which

Lady Frances had calculated to play her destined part in the life which she had purposed to lead; and here, accordingly, she made her debut in the very top of her bent.

She had married Lord Bellamont because he had a fine estate, was a gay gallant-looking young man, with a fine showy person, and could supply her with all the paraphernalia of dress, jewels, and equipage, in which she centered her principal ideas of happiness, and which could render her an object of envy to characters equally vain and heartless as her own. She had overlooked in her husband the more precious qualities of a warm, affectionate, and ingenuous disposition: or rather, she had regarded these as mere tools, wherewith to work her own will, and obtain an absolute sway.

Lord Bellamont, on his part, had married *her*, *bona fide*, for red-hot love: but it was that sort of love which, though had it fallen on good ground it would have brought forth good fruit, yet falling as it did, it had no basis to rest upon, and preying ever on its own disappointment, withered away in process of time, and settled in a captiousness of temper which embittered his existence.

After a few weeks of married life, it chanced, on some trivial, every-day occurrence, that Lord Bellamont had occasion to cross Lady Frances's will. This he did in a gentle amiable way, but it was not so received.

"I never heard such nonsense!" cried Lady Frances; "but marriage is a hateful *metier* to which I must serve my apprenticeship before I shall know exactly how to set up for myself."

"Nay, Frances, love! speak not so childishly, so pettishly, so unfeelingly; you know how I love you."

"Yes, I do indeed, to my cost; you have just given me a specimen:—so childishly, indeed! It is you, my Lord, who are a child, pleased to tyrannize over your new bauble, a wife:" and she looked at him contemptuously, and left the room.

"Impertinent! foolish!" muttered Lord Bellamont, and was on the point of following her to vent his choler; but while he hesitated, his kindly feelings returned. "Perhaps it is I who am foolish," said he; "after all, why try her temper uselessly? why contradict her in a trifle? I will prove to her, at least, that if I am childish, I can

have the gentleness of a child," and he flew after her. "Frances! dearest Frances, forgive me! I cannot bear to quarrel with you. Quarrel with *you*? impossible!—that will I never."

Lady Frances smiled; and though she smiled in disdain as he pressed her to his honest heart, still she smiled, and he was pleased, if not satisfied.

So long as Godolphin Castle remained full of visitors, Lady Frances professed herself vastly well amused. Now and then she bantered Lord Bellamont upon his talents for playing the Celadon, saying,—"You must really, my dear Lord, learn some new part for the London boards, or we shall be the laughing-stock of all our acquaintance: besides, it is beneath your dignity to be following me about like my lap-dog. One of two things will infallibly be concluded; either that you are ridiculously jealous, or that I have by my conduct given you cause to suspect me. I leave you to draw the inference. But I need not say more; I am sure you could not bear to be put on a footing with that *soufre douleur*, Sir James Dashwood, who has gone about like a sick turtle-dove these last two years; or if *you* bore it, I could not bear it for you: positively I should die of shame or run away from you."

"Dear Frances, you are more amusing than any one," and the fond husband laughed faintly, and with a bad grace, while several other young men who were surrounding Lady Frances, laughed in good earnest at what they termed matrimonial sport, while Lady Frances joined in the mirth which she excited at her husband's expense. But when all opportunity of exercising this amiable talent failed, owing to the departure of every visitor from the Castle, Lady Frances sank into a quiescent state of torpor, which at first her husband hailed with delight, as he mistook it for the placid forerunner of domestic enjoyment. He now hoped to find the friend and counsellor in his wife, which he had looked to as the perfection of all rational comfort; and for that purpose, as they sat together over a large fire, she half asleep, he enjoying visions of homefelt felicity which were never to be realised, he took her passive hand and began detailng his project of passing a great part of the year in Carnarvonshire, in the beautiful place which his father had settled upon him on his marriage.

At this moment, the house-steward, followed by several footmen, came in with an enormous Christmas bowl, and various cates prepared for

that rejoicing day, begging the young bride and bridegroom to honour his Grace's goodness to them by partaking of the ale brewed at Lord Bellamont's birth; he immediately complied, drank the old man's health, and to the mirth of the party below stairs, which so delighted them, that they roared out a "Long live Lady Frances and my Lord."

But when they requested her Ladyship, for luck's sake, to take a glass of the precious beverage, she turned away haughtily, saying even the smell of the thing made her sick; and they left the apartment with very different impressions of their lord and their lady.

"I am sorry, Frances," said Lord Bellamont, "that you did not condescend to pretend to taste their ale; a small courtesy from persons in a higher station is considered as a favour, and the reverse is cruel to the humble, and impolitic in regard to yourself."

Lady Frances yawned; and stretching herself more languidly on her seat, declared she had not thought about it.

Lord Bellamont sighed and reverted again to his settling in the Welsh mountains. An im-

moveable fixedness of dissent overspread the expression of her countenance, but he construed this into passive acquiescence, and went on to speak of his hope of coming into Parliament at the next election. She raised herself on her chair at this declaration, and said with animation—

"Right, my dear Bellamont, quite right!—a man of your consequence ought to be in Parliament." She repeated her words, laying a great emphasis on "*your consequence.*"

Lord Bellamont drew himself up, with a degree of self-complacency which showed itself in his countenance. Who is there without their foibles? But it is a pity—nay, it is an awful crime—when those we love best, and in whom we repose all our confidence, those who *should* love us most, make the discovery of these foibles turn to our undoing.

Lady Frances saw she had touched the master key—vanity, and after a short pause, added;—"I assure you, my love," (a term of endearment which she used sparingly,)—"I do assure you, that you have been hitherto much too good and gentle for those you have to deal with; you have been quite the *ridicule* of all the young men of

fashion of your own age, for being so completely under your papa's government. Take care, if you stick too close to my side, that they do not laugh at you next for being tied to your wife's apron-string."

Lord Bellamont coloured and bit his lip: touch him on the score of ridicule, and his naturally fine qualities, both of head and heart, were all put to confusion, till nature and reflection rallied them again.

"Now, dear Bellamont," she continued, "when once you have a home of your own, and can live as you choose, without all those impertinent remarks which at present assail you every moment of the day, you will tacitly assert your own independence without quarrelling.—Oh! I would not have you quarrel for the world; nothing so impolitic as quarrelling, and family quarrels the worst of all. Besides, it is wrong, altogether wrong!—but one need not for that reason suffer oneself to be led by the nose all the days of one's life. Remember, you are of age, and the place—what is it called?—with the Hottentot name, in Carmarthenshire—must be yours, as it is settled

upon you: so that it is high time you should slip the leading-strings."

"Why, to say the truth," replied the young Lord, "I do believe I have been rather soft; but my father doated on me to such a degree! and the fact is, there was nobody I loved half so well as my own father till I knew you; for whatever may be his faults in the eyes of the world, he was always the best of parents to me, most kind, most indulgent!"

"Oh! doubtless," interrupted Lady Frances with a sneering tone of impatience, which she intended should be softened into one of acquiescence—"Oh, doubtless the Duke is the best man in the world! I do not mean to say any thing the least against him. All that I intended to remark was, that he plays the game of all fathers—likes to hold the reins of government in his hands, and forgets that you are no longer a child. And what ought you to do?—why play the part of all sons who are in their senses, to be sure! and show him that you remember your own rights. Do the thing decently and well; but get out of the go-cart as fast as you can. There was an instance,

the other day, of the servile state you are living in, about that pack of fox-hounds you wanted to buy. Could any thing be more ridiculous than the Duke's preventing your making the purchase? except, indeed, your consenting not to make it."

"Ridiculous, Frances! do you really think so? Well, at all events I am deuced sorry I lost the dogs, for my gamekeeper says they were quite a bargain."

"I dare swear they were to him!" inwardly said Lady Frances. "Oh! I am sure of it!" (aloud); and there was a sort of twirl on her lip, which Lord Bellamont had never yet learnt to construe in the true sense of its expression. "At any rate, I must say I thought it monstrous good-humoured of you to be lectured into foregoing your wish to have them. Now you see, if we were settled in a home of our own, all this species of petty *surveillance* would end of itself, and we should be as gay as the sun. Your being in Parliament, my love, will give you an excellent pretext for taking a good house in town; and a man who is to act the part in life which you are born to, and who possesses the talents which, without flattery, you possess, ought to take his own line in

politics, and indeed, in every thing else; for old people have such an odd view of things, and see every thing through their spectacles, *de travers*. They may have known the world before the flood, and made their own use of it too; but they cannot possibly know the world which exists now—I mean, the sort of world we should choose to live in. No! for pity's sake, let them enjoy themselves in their own way, and let us be very cordial and polite, and all that sort of thing; but do not let me have the mortification of seeing you laughed at by your cotemporaries."

"Really, my dear Frances, there may be some truth in all you say; I have been too soft, and I see my error. It has quite rendered my life a burthen to me." (Lord Bellamont had been the happiest of men till his wife assisted him to this discovery.) "Yes, Frances, you are my only friend; now, trusting to you, I shall indeed become a different creature!"

How unwittingly he prophecied his own fate! Once thoroughly imbued with the belief that he had been cozened, maltreated, despised as a child, he became unhappy, looked upon every thing his fond father proposed for his advantage with a jealous

eye, and though this change was not worked at once, it was very rapid in its progress, and very fatal in its effect. At first, his intercourse with his parent became constrained, artificial, and disingenuous; till, by endeavouring to avoid the wholesome restraint of a loving father's salutary influence, he fell into the snare of a heartless, selfish, dissipated woman.

Whenever the Duke of Godolphin proposed any thing to Lady Frances which did not tally with her plans, she immediately said, "Oh! I am sure Lord Bellamont would not hear of such a thing! I should be happy to do whatever he chose; but I know him so well, my dear duke! He may not like to contradict you, but he will never bring himself to submit to the measure." Thus did an artful woman gradually and successfully loosen those filial ties which it ought to have been her pride, and would have proved her true happiness, to strengthen—and all for what? To run a course of unchecked dissipation.

Lord Bellamont naturally loved reading, and was desirous of improving his mind; but he had not that determined bias to study which could overcome all temptations of idleness and pleasure.

His beautiful wife, for whom his passion was as yet unabated, could at any time put all his graver resolves to flight; and either by that monkey's weapon—ridicule, or by the wiles of an amusing tongue, she could, at any time, lure him from those pursuits which, had they once become habitual, she had wit enough to know would have rendered her own intentions abortive,—and have given that firmness to his character which was all it required to render him a truly valuable man.

During a long, and to Lady Frances an apparently interminable winter, Lord Bellamont passed all the time which was not spent with his wife, in the company of his gamekeeper in field sports. This man worshipped the rising sun, and foresaw that a much wider scope for peculation and misrule would lie open to him in the new reign, than he could venture on attempting to practise in the present. Every thing, therefore, connected with his province, was reported by him to his young lord, to be in a sad state. The kennels, the dogs, the horses, all were mismanaged; the whole was a poor shabby establishment compared to what a man of my Lord Bellamont's rank ought to have.

"His Grace is an old nobleman now," this man

would say; "can't go into the field or look after these matters; 'tis a pity he don't give 'em up to your Lordship. Why, I declare there 's Captain Lepel and Squire Carlton and Lord Newington, has all better nor we have. I declare some of these here gemmen as I went out with a month ago, laughed at our turn out."

"That 's too bad!" said Lord Bellamont, biting his lips.

After these and similar conversations. Lord Bellamont would return to Lady Frances, and complain that his hunting establishment was quite a subject of ridicule to all his friends. She would then assume a serious air, and say, "Ah! my dear Bellamont! believe me, though hitherto you have never had any real friend to tell you the truth, this ridicule attaches to you in a thousand ways besides that of dogs and horses. Cut the matter short, dear Bellamont! The election will take place very soon; doubtless you will come in; and then with a good establishment of your own, and surrounded by real friends, men of your own rank and age, you will no longer have all these petty *désagrémens* to contend with, which at pre-

sent sour your temper, and in fact do place you in a ridiculous point of view."

"My dearest Frances! Yes, I shall always be happy while I have you to love me and to tell me the truth."

Notwithstanding all this fond weakness, Lord Bellamont, in every other respect, was not a foolish man. He was only on the point of becoming one by being misled, partly by his own passions; but his chief danger lay in his fine-lady wife.

They came to London. Lord Bellamont got into Parliament; and Lady Frances established herself in the Parliament of Ton. They were the gayest of the gay. They rose late; they drove their several ways; they occasionally were invited together to dinner, the only occasion in which it is thought decent for man and wife to be in each other's society. But when by unlucky chance there was no invitation out, no club for my Lord, no opera or ball for my Lady, then a *tête-à-tête* matrimonial, generally proved fatal to the enjoyment of both. It was too often passed in reproaches by the one party—in sneers by the other; or when mutual peace was kept, it was

only by the stimulus of extreme entertainment, derived from some story of a recent explosion of some fashionable intrigue, which proved to Lady Frances a never-failing source of delightful conversation, and served her as the ground-work on which to erect visions (the only visions, to do her justice, in which she ever indulged,) of many fracas to come. On such occasions, she generally wound up the climax of her story by observing—"What a fool that woman was, to give up her position in the world for the nine days' love of any man!"

To this, Lord Bellamont would sometimes reply: "But you know the whole story was blown—she was discovered—she could not help it."

"Bah! there's just what makes me say she was a fool!—Do you think one cannot keep one's own secrets, whatever one may do with any body else's?"

"At that rate, Frances, a man would never be hung for forgery or murder; for nobody *intends* to be discovered in a crime."

"Oh! but there are a thousand persons in-

terested in the detection of *those* crimes—scarcely ever more than one in that of the *venial* trespass of preferring some one else to one's husband!"—(she spoke laughingly.)

"Frances, it is no venial trespass," said Lord Bellamont, with some warmth; "it is the foundation of every wretchedness which exists upon earth."

"Nay, now, my dear Bellamont, I did but jest! One would think the case was your own, you take up the matter with such furious zeal. I wish Mr. Carlton, or Lepel, or Lord Newington, were here to hear you. They would say you were turned methodist or field preacher! Smooth your handsome brows, pray, or you 'll frighten me!—Bless me! only conceive the ridicule which might attach to your being so very touchy upon these matters! Do you not think they would cast a suspicious eye at me? Have a care, Bellamont:—nothing renders a man so truly ridiculous as jealousy."

"And nothing renders a woman so truly despicable as being a brazen coquette."

"Well, if you have nothing more agreeable

to entertain me with than abuse, I wish you a good evening, for it is time to dress for the Opera."

That night, as Lord Bellamont sat in a box by himself, attending or seeming to attend to the stage, he beheld his wife opposite, with Lady Arabella Mellington, his sister, (for that Lady was now married to a man of Lady Frances's recommendation,) surrounded by coxcombs, and apparently wholly unconscious that he was remarking her; which, with the most painful feelings labouring in his breast, he was striving to do unobserved. At that moment Captain Lepel entered, accosting him with a "How goes it, Bellamont? Why, I never knew before that you were a connoisseur in music. I have been admiring you for some time past—you seem quite rapt in ecstasy."

"Not I," said Lord Bellamont, yawning affectedly; for, next to having it thought that he was watching his wife, his being caught in an ecstasy at any thing would have most highly discomposed him,—as by this time he was sufficiently advanced in the training of *ton* to have

forfeited most things sooner than his diploma to being one of that exclusive community.

"You have been admiring *la Pasta*, then?" said Captain Lepel.

"Yes;—no—she 's well enough!"

"What! I have not guessed right yet?—Your own wife, perhaps?"

"Oh! I leave you to do that!" replied Lord Bellamont, reddening, and biting his lip.

"And you do well, Bellamont," rejoined the coxcomb; "for whether you left me the privilege or not, it is one I should most undoubtedly take, without your Lordship's leave."

"To be sure," replied Lord Bellamont sneeringly; "else wherefore live we in the land of fashion?" His Lordship however, by this audacity of his companion, was thrown off his guard, and spoke not in his made-up, drawling voice, but in his natural emphatic tone.

Captain Lepel saw through the whole truth at a glance; and argued rightly, that Lord Bellamont was just in the mode when he might the most easily be played upon, and made to serve his turn. He therefore left off goading him;

adroitly changed the subject; looked through his larquette round the house carelessly; declared there was not a soul in the boxes, though they were full to overflowing; and then said to Lord Bellamont—"Where do you sup to-night!"

"I don't know—I think I shall not sup. I have got a confounded head-ache. I shall go home."

"Pho! pho! Home! that's enough to *give* a man the head-ache at any time, not to drive it away; no, you are not come to that yet, I hope, Bellamont,—'tis the last resource of a poor Benedick; besides, I have just heard Carlton deliver an embassy from Mrs. Dashwood to Lady Bellamont, requesting her to sup with her, which invitation was accepted; you will therefore be a forlorn turtle-dove if you go home—quite a *Sir James.*

The recollection of what Lady Frances, his most able instructress, had once said to him on this subject, rushed to his remembrance, and his eyes flashing fire, he replied—"No, no, I am a mighty good sort of man, I believe, but not at all inclined to act the part of a turtle dove."

"Well then, come with me and sup at Crockford's, several of my friends will be there."

"But will you take me? for I have not my carriage to-night."

"By all means. Be in the lobby after the opera, and I shall be sure to find you." So saying, Captain Lepel left him to chew the cud of fashionable reflection.

It was now towards the end of the performance, and Lord Bellamont ventured to the box in which his wife was seated, having contrived a plausible excuse of having something to say to his sister. As he entered, one or two loungers rose like a parcel of scared birds, and departed.

"Shall you want to be set down any where to-night, *love?*" said Lady Frances, addressing him. "As I am going to Mrs. Dashwood's supper, perhaps I can be of use to you."

Considering the terms on which they had parted, the word *love*, electrified the kind heart of Lord Bellamont; and had it been tacked to a request of going home, with what unmixed delight would he have hailed the affectionate proposal! Even as it was, he replied in his own endearing way—

"Yes, if you will come home with me you will be of great use and comfort too, for I have a

head-ache," (he might have added a heart-ache,) "and do not feel at all well. Lepel asked me to sup with him; but if you are inclined to do a kind, dull thing, and go home instead, I shall infinitely prefer it."

"Dear!" exclaimed Lady Frances, with a look of indifference, "I am vastly sorry, but it is quite impossible. I have engaged myself to go with your sister to Mrs. Dashwood's, and she would be so very much affronted, after having promised her, if I did not go. Besides, it is a party made on purpose for me, quite our own set."

"On purpose for *you*," rejoined Lord Bellamont. "Ah, Frances! did you even know of it till you came to the Opera this night?"

Lady Frances coloured; for there are various reasons for colouring. Detection in a lie was one which never failed to call forth this amiable symptom of better feelings in Lady Frances's cheek. But she rallied suddenly, and said—"No, to be sure I did not, that is just the thing that makes it so very piquante. Mr. Carlton told me that Mrs. Dashwood had kept the whole thing a profound secret, on purpose to surprise me agreeably, though

she has been thinking of nothing else these three days."

"In that case I think it is incumbent on me to go too," said Lord Bellamont, "only in common civility—so I shall be your escort."

"The Jealous Husband, a farce!" muttered Lady Frances, shrugging her shoulders.

At this juncture, Captain Lepel, Mr. Carlton, and several other men, entered the box. The two above-mentioned gentlemen inquired if they could be of any use in escorting the ladies to their carriages, the Opera being over, and the house nearly emptied.

"Certainly," said Lady Frances, taking Mr. Carlton's arm, while Lady Arabella accepted that of the other cavalier.

The poor husband, Lord Bellamont, was left to walk out alone, with what satisfaction he might, after the manner of husbands.

True politeness is a beautiful polish; nay more, it is a valuable lustre on worth of character; for it is the offspring of good feeling, and good feeling cannot bear to give pain. Had there been a grain of it in Lady Frances's composition, she

would not have borne that her husband should appear to be neglected, or be secondary, even for a moment, in her estimation, to any other human being; but had this observation been made to Lady Frances, she would have pleaded the customs of the world, the impossibility of doing, in such trivial circumstances, differently from other people; and a long et cetera of impertinent nothings, that only mean, "I am tired of my husband, and I wish he were tired of me—we have enough of each other at home." But this genuine good breeding, which has its source in the heart, deserves not to be named with that merely superficial *manner* arising out of a selfish regard to personal indulgence or personal vanity.

Lord Bellamont at times felt all this, and even reflected upon it; but had not the courage to break through the flimsy veil of fashion, or disentangle himself at once from the toils into which he had fallen. If the fear of vice had been as strongly before his eyes as the fear of ridicule was, he might have saved himself and his wife from ruin. But on the night of the above described scene at the Opera, he felt obliged to Captain Lepel for whirling him away to Crockford's,

where wine and vice silenced reflection, and where considerable losses at play completely deadened all other nobler cares.

At four in the morning, Lady Frances returned home, after a night passed partly in listening to the confidences of some licentious men, such as should have startled the delicate ear of a pure wife, and have made her feel herself sullied to have heard even by accident; but this, Lady Frances called "knowing the world;" and these men, who made her these degrading confidences were the first to boast of having done so, and to adduce them as proofs of the footing upon which they stood in her good graces. The rest of Lady Frances's mispent hours were yet worse employed, in lending a pleased attention to avowed admiration. The former she called talking to her friends —the latter a little innocent Flirtation. Had any one, who felt really interested in her, told her truth—she would have tossed her head in disdain, saying, she only did as every other young woman of fashion did.

On returning home, and entering her dressing-room, she asked her maid if Lord Bellamont was come home.

"No, my Lady."

"Oh! very well, that's right. What is the hour,—two o'clock?"

"Past four, my Lady," answered the poor sleepy maid.

"Remember, you are to say I came home at two o'clock—now don't forget—quick, undress me."

And without any thought of what a night may bring forth; without one sigh of repentance, one wish of amendment, she only endeavoured to lose the feverish excitement of her spirits, in order to be asleep before her husband came home, lest she should be disturbed by a curtain lecture.

One more scene will illustrate the progress of this too common history.

Days and weeks rolled on. The misery of married misery is, of all others, the most difficult to be borne: and the really amiable Lord Bellamont, from one fatal weakness, vanity, was degenerating fast into that wretched wight, a cross husband. He wanted the stability of character to be what Nature intended him to be, a truly estimable man, and he lost himself and his wife, for the sake—of what? of being called one of the ton. After a reconciliation which followed a violent

storm of temper, in the course of which reproaches and recriminations and bursts of ill-humour on either side had carried the quarrel to its highest climax, Lord Bellamont was preparing to pass one evening of quiet comfort at home He had procured many new baubles to delight his thankless wife. He had placed a luxurious seat, decorated with various cushions; had drawn around every object which could delight the taste, or amuse the fancy; had heaped works of imagination and of art on her table, and sat expecting her approach with lover-like impatience.

At length the door opened; Lady Frances looked in at the door *en robe-de-chambre* saying, "What, Bellamont? not gone to dress yet!"

"Dress, my love! I thought you would excuse my making any more elaborate toilette to-night."

"I excuse you? what do you mean! This is Lady Ellingby's night, you know."

"The devil!" cried Lord Bellamont, rising with angry impatience and dashing down a favourite China vase;—"it is too bad, Madam; you are the arrantest gad-about—the most ungrateful woman, the most consummate flirt that ever——" and he stopped for want of breath.

"It is indeed too bad, Bellamont," replied Lady Frances in one of her mildest voices, "to hear me call you all these names. I am glad at least that no one else hears you; for you know what ridicule would attach to you. It is indeed too bad to see my beautiful vase broken to pieces; too bad to see a person of your consequence and of your education make such a fool of himself."

"'Sdeath! Madam, it is enough to try the temper of any husband to be tied to such a woman as you are; one who lives for the public, and who is strange only in her own house; who never performs a single duty; whose whole heart is centered in vanity. When a man, driven thus to desperation, does lose his temper, he in some degree becomes an object of contempt: I own he does; but if you had one grain of heart, one scruple of conscience, you, you who know *what* I suffer, and that my sufferings are occasioned by you, ought to be the last person who should taunt me with my infirmity. Your sister Emily would never have done so. No; she would never have acted as you have done. She indeed *was* an angel."

"That, my Lord, is a perfection at which I never aimed. I have heard of angels upon earth;

and whenever I have seen the creatures so called, I always thought them detestable. But if you remember, I never denied that Emily was not much better suited to you than I could be. You have both of you had a little sneaking kindness towards Methodism, and a sort of innocent lackadaisical taste which made you harmonize wonderfully. It is a great pity you did not marry her; you could have gone about correcting the world together from all their wicked ways."

"Too bad, by heavens!" exclaimed Lord Bellamont, walking about in a rage, while his wife in the same cold, collected tone went on with her tirade.

"As to myself, I always hated cant and prosing; I never should endure to lead a moping life; and because I confess this, and act upon it, you fly into a passion and call me all sorts of names. You have nobody to blame but yourself; you know you *would* do the deed, Bellamont; why, after having done it, render yourself ridiculous and make yourself the laughing-stock of the whole town, by showing that you repent it?"

"Ah! Frances, well do you know that such was not always your way of thinking; at least

such were not always your declarations. You led me to suppose very differently of your character or you could not have deceived me. Have you no recollection of certain professions of being happy to live with me any where—to enter into my interests, and to promote my views! Instead of this, what have I found? A woman who lives for the world alone; whose every thought and wish seem at variance with domestic comfort. To love the world in reason, to enjoy its empty pleasures in moderation, is natural, and even may tend to the promotion of temporal interests; but to become the slave of it, to the dereliction of every duty and every feeling, is beneath a rational being."

"Why, my dear Bellamont, I never knew before that you were such an orator! Positively I shall expect on the next question in Parliament, to read Lord Bellamont's triumphant speech. Only, joking apart, tell me what you wish me to do, and I will do it. But now only look at every other person of our own age and station in life, and observe if they do not lead exactly the same lives that we do. You know if one goes to one place, one must go to another; and without

at all intending it, one thing comes after another, till every moment is engaged, and positively there is not time to stay at home. But, love, if you wish it, I will certainly send my excuse to Lady Ellingsby's to-night; only, you know it is her last night this season, and we have never been once to her house; and besides, you know," (and she looked archly in her husband's countenance,) "what will become of poor Lady Dashwood, if *you* do not go? she depends on seeing you to-night, and I am sure you are too courteous a cavalier to have the heart to disappoint her."

"Lady Dashwood," replied Lord Bellamont, in rather a confused manner, "is a lady who always treats her husband with the greatest deference and respect, and nobody has a right to say a word against her."

"Against her? Oh, I am not so ill-humoured; I am pleading *for* her; besides, you know that she is *my friend;* it is I who introduced her to you. Come, come, Bellamont, go and dress for Lady Ellingsby's. Your eyes are remarkably brilliant; and, your toilette finished, you will be irresistible; whereas, if we stay here, looking at each other alone, it is ten to one but we shall revert to the

subject of our little quarrel; whereas if we both go out, determined to be gay and agreeable, we shall in reality become so. Think only of Lady Dashwood——there now, already the sweetest smile is playing around your lips."

"Nonsense, Frances," half yielding.

"Come, Bellamont, you know full well she *will* be there, and you are dying to go. I am sure I can forgive you a little innocent Flirtation: nothing I am so proud of as to see my husband admired, *proné, fêté,* by other women; and, you know, you have only to show yourself to secure this triumph."

Poor Lord Bellamont! his vanity and his soft heart were not proof against the insidious voice of flattery. Off they both went to dress; and a short time only elapsed ere they were in the brilliant well-lighted saloon of Lady Ellingsby. A buzz of admiration floated round the crowded room when they made their appearance; and Lord Bellamont forgot the wiser and more natural feelings which had depressed him, in the triumph of being the husband of a beautiful woman.

After the first homage of admiration had passed away, there were other beautiful women also who

obtained *their* share; and, like every thing of the same evanescent nature, Lady Frances found the transport had subsided, and left her in quiet possession of her husband's arm much longer than suited her inclinations: she looked around the room in vain for Lady Dashwood—that lady was nowhere to be seen; and Lady Frances had recourse to all the ingenuity of her brain to unlink herself from her companion. He, on the contrary, really enjoyed an honest feeling of happiness.

"Observe the decorations of this room, my dear Frances. This is something like what I should wish for your drawing-room at Llewellyn, in Caernarvonshire, only the hangings should be of a soberer hue, for the sake of the pictures; and then, you know, the old tapestry would look so admirably in the Ebony Hall."

"Oh! don't talk to me of tapestry; I hate it; with the great men wielding their scimitars, as though they would cut one's head off, and the goggle-eyed princesses kneeling to them. Oh, you make me shudder to think of it!"

"Well, dear Frances, your own suite of apartments shall be fitted up entirely in your own way."

"You are very good" (yawning); "but in that savage country, that horrid desert, it does not much signify how any thing is fitted up: no taste to commend, no eyes to see. In short, 'where none are beaux, 'tis vain to be a belle.'"

"Then you count my eyes for nothing?"

"Ah, ah, ah!" with an affected laugh; "a husband's eyes looking through the spectacles of matrimony—you cannot count *them* for eyes. Why, my dear Bellamont, we see each other all day long, and all night long. We must want a little variety, you know."

"Would to Heaven we did see each other as constantly as you describe! but since we have been in London, count up, I pray you, the hours we have spent alone together, and you will find how few they have been; or if an evening has surprised us in each other's company, owing to the fatigue of past dissipation, or a preparatory beauty rest, for that which was to come, you have fallen asleep, and left me to commune with my own melancholy reflections. Frances, is this as it *should* be? Is this as you promised, and wrote it *would* be?"

He might have gone on some time longer, had

not Lady Frances replied, yawning through the sticks of her fan, "Mercy on me! a curtain lecture in public! besides, I believe, if I went to sleep once, you have four times:" and again she yawned.

"You are tired, I am afraid," said Lord Bellamont with a sigh!

"Yes—no—that is to say, a sort of pain in my back—really this is a very stupid place after all; nobody one knows here—such a set!"

"Well then, Frances, if you find no amusement, I am sure I do not: shall we return home?"

"Oh! as Lady Dashwood is not here, you find it mighty dull, I suppose."

"Have a care, Frances, I could retort; but we are overheard. Let us be gone; I will call our carriage:" and he went out for that purpose.

Just at that moment, Mr. Carlton entered the room, and coming up to Lady Frances, as though she were the only person in the apartment worthy of being spoken to by him,—"Ah, by all the loves and graces," he exclaimed, "what good fortune to find you here, Lady Frances! why I did not know you were in town. You are like Maho-

met's tomb, never to be seen by the sons of men:" and he fixed his rude gaze of effrontery on her person.

Lady Frances coloured, moved on her tip-toes in a sort of dancing fashion, tossed her head about, and played off divers and sundry airs. The pain in the back was forgotten; the yawning languor discarded, and a pleased animation overspread her features.

"And pray, Mr. Carlton, may I ask where you have been? with Dian and her nymphs awaking Echo, no doubt; in plain English, hunting and shooting with dogs and gamekeepers. Well, I am glad you are tired of that at last. I do not care if a man takes a little inspiring field-exercise, but there may be too much of it."

"There is always too much of any thing which keeps me from admiring your bright eyes: such an air, such taste, how you are dressed! Well, certainly, there is nothing like you; and that ornament in your head-dress—how exquisite! But I see Bellamont's face coming towards you: upon my honour, it is not fair, this monopoly; it is perfectly ridiculous; he is quite a rustic; we must teach him better manners. What does he

mean by locking you up and following you about like your shadow? why we must all make league against such tyranny. Lepel, come and assist me; a joust, a tournay, a feat of arms, is to be performed here; we must break a lance with Bellamont, and rush to the rescue of a persecuted fair one."

So saying, several coxcombs clustered round Lady Frances, who stood, nothing loth, simpering and pronouncing monosyllables which might be construed any way.

"Locked up! Dear me! no—not locked up: I am always riding, or driving, or walking. It is your own fault if you don't see me:" and she looked significantly at Mr. Carlton.

"That 's true enough," whispered Lady Clara Reeves to another envious old maid who was listening with curious ears to the incense offered up at a shrine that she never had called her own, and inveighing against yielding to temptations wherewith she had never been tempted.

"Frances," said Lord Bellamont, his fine, tall, commanding figure towering above the insignificants who surrounded her, "the carriage waits."

"Come, don't be so very young," whispered

Mr. Carlton in her ear, as he observed she was about to obey the summons. "What? you are afraid of a curtain lecture! well, I thought you had been a cleverer person than not to know how to put an end to such torment."

"I am not inclined, Lord Bellamont, to go home yet," was her reply: "but pray do not put yourself to inconvenience for me—take the carriage and" (looking about the room, her eye sparkled as she caught Lady Dashwood's figure,) "there's *my* friend Lady Dashwood just come in, *she* will set me home."

"I am glad to see you have recovered your fatigue," said Lord Bellamont, turning away, pale and mortified, as Lady Frances passed him to go to her friend.

"When a man is married to a flirt of a wife," observed Mr. Altamont to Mrs. Neville, who happened to have witnessed this scene, "how very easy it is for her to place him in an awkward and ridiculous point of view."

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief how Lord Bellamont can suffer it. He certainly wants proper spirit, and he is not only losing his own happiness, but his wife's character; hunch! hunch! it never

will turn out well—never; they must both come to misery!"

"Only observe," said Mr. Altamont, with melancholy discernment, "the great intimacy which appears now to subsist between Lady Frances and Lady Dashwood. See, how she talks to that latter Lady; but the friendship of such women is hollowness." And could Mr. Altamont have overheard that conversation, how indignantly would he have remarked upon its tenour, and how easily have foretold its end."

"My dear Lady Dashwood," said Lady Frances, flying up to her and whispering in her ear, "how delighted I am to see you—why there was nothing in the room one could endure to look at, of female kind, before you came in. You know, Lady Ellingsby is a grave gone-by sort of personage—nothing but a few wits and old-fashioned dowagers ever come here. I wonder what brought me, only you know it is so dull to stay at home, and poor Bellamont does get so tired when he has no place to go to; but now you are come, you are such a favourite, that all will seem delightful to him. I am so charmed that he should be under such a good influence as yours," she continued, assuming

a face of proper matronly interest in her husband's welfare; "for really he has a vastly good heart, and does not at all, as some people suppose, want for sense; but, you know, before he married, he never lived in the world; that is to say, what is really to be called the world; and I am quite grieved to see that he hardly knows any young men of his own rank in life, and this gives him such a forsaken appearance. Do, my dear friend, discipline him a little, if you please, and he will become a different creature under your tuition."

"I would do any thing in the world for you, my dearest Lady Frances," replied Lady Dashwood; and with a tender look of intelligence they separated, to play their several games.

Lady Dashwood accosted Lord Bellamont with a "Well, Lord Bellamont, to be sure you have reason to be proud of Lady Frances—how very much more handsome she is than any one else! I declare I think she looks better this year than she did the last."

"Do you really think so?" said Lord Bellamont, affecting indifference.

"Yes, I do; and, if you were not her husband,

you would think so too; but you know you are in love with her, nevertheless: obsolete as the idea is of being in love with one's wife. You see, I can read your heart."

"You can do any thing you wish, doubtless," replied Lord Bellamont; "but if you read my heart once, I am sure you will never do so again, for you will only read such a melancholy page, as will fill you with *ennui*."

"You astonish and grieve me. Miserable! Lord Bellamont, miserable!" (with a look in which tenderness and sorrow were blended) "Who then can be happy? I am astonished—shocked beyond measure; but if it is any consolation to you to pour out your sorrows in the ear of a true friend, confide in me. We are observed; our conversation is too *suivie* for public society; call on me to-morrow morning; I shall be alone; and with what interest shall I receive your confidence!" Then, speaking aloud to some third person who was a little way off, she remarked, "Dear me, what has happened to Lady Frances's head-dress? Mr. Carlton seems to be undertaking the trade of coiffeur: did you ever see any thing so graceful,

Lord Bellamont, as the manner in which Lady Frances bends her head while he is arranging her diamond aigrette, which she has just dropped."

"Disgraceful!" muttered Lord Bellamont in her ear, thrown off his guard by jealousy.

"My dear friend, you are irritable to-night," was her reply. "To-morrow we will talk quietly, trust me; but do not show this temper of mind to the world; it will be too happy to have you for a laughing stock."

From this fatal night, the web was drawn close around Lord Bellamont which was to entangle him to his undoing. It were fruitless, it were degrading, to go through all the art Lady Dashwood too successfully planned and practised to win him to her purposes. She explained in a mysterious way why she had not invited him to her supper; and at last insinuated that his company was so dangerous to her peace, that she had avoided him as carefully as his society was sought by every other woman. Now, however, when she saw him unhappy, she could not think of herself; she could only endeavour to mitigate his sufferings. When he spoke to her of the views of domestic happiness which he had entertained, and of their

total overthrow, she pretended to be exceedingly shocked. "To be sure," Lady Dashwood said, "Lady Frances was a woman who always seemed made for the world, and one might have expected that she would not exactly *filer le parfait amour* by the fireside—but then with such an inamorato! She might at least have——"

"Oh!" interrupted Lord Bellamont, "I did not expect her to be a recluse—but never, never to be happy at home!"

"It is, to be sure, rather too bad," said Lady Dashwood. "Ah! if she only knew what a treasure she possesses. But——"

"You are very kind, my dear friend," said Lord Bellamont.

And now followed a long course of instruction as to the means he should pursue to reclaim her, and the methods he should adopt to rescue his own mind from painful contemplations. As to the first, she assured him, that all attempts to assert his right as a husband to forbid her leading the life she did, could only draw down upon himself the ridicule of the world. "It is always better," she said, "to leave these things to correct themselves. As to the latter," she added, "I, you

know, am a sort of Mentor from which you must endure to hear harsh truths." Among other specious advice, she warned him of the dangers of play, an excitement to which, though originally averse, and long indifferent, he had recourse, as people swallow spirits or opium to silence their conscience.

"A little harmless ombre or bassette in good society," she would say, "cannot tend to any derangement of fortune. But that horrid club!—those blacklegs—those sharpers. Do not, my dear Lord, trust yourself to their manœuvres. At my house, you will always find a party ready to while away a few hours, where you will at the same time be safe."

Thus the whole iniquitous train was laid, and took effect, which was to plunge Lord Bellamont in disgrace and ruin; and his own wife was the original promoter of the scheme, not perhaps with a full insight into its ultimate issue, but from the wicked and weak intention of running herself a career of thoughtless and unchecked dissipation.

CHAPTER VI.

O Nature! a' thy shews and forms
To feeling, pensive hearts have charms,
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls in gusty storms
The lang dark night.

BURNS.

How differently had the winter months passed over Lady Emily and General Montgomery in their retirement, and with what a contrast of feelings did they hail the return of spring! Even during the intense rigours of a severe winter, Lady Emily still found a beauty in the landscape: for Nature is never dead to eyes accustomed to read her aright; and the dashing through the spray of a snowy path, the delicate fretwork of frost on the fibres of trees and plants, the pureness of the air, and the cerulean tint of the sky, with the dark colour of the broad Severn, were

pleasures and beauties to be admired and tasted by Lady Emily even in wintry hours. The sounds of distant rustic labour or merriment that were borne distinctly through the clear and rarified atmosphere, gave animation and cheerfulness to the otherwise sombre landscape: they told of the vicinage of human beings; and surely utter solitude, however sublime, cannot long be grateful to the heart of social man. They told of the business, the cares, the delight of fellow-creatures, and were circumstances which added a lively interest to the scene.

In addition to these, how many pleasing objects rewarded Lady Emily's tasteful eyes in and about their humble dwelling—objects which were all the offspring of her industry and exertion, and thus their value was enhanced tenfold. Her refined perception and enjoyment of beautiful things, took a wide range through the whole province of the endless regions of taste. The comforts and even elegancies of furniture with which she had adorned the interior of their dwelling, were chiefly wrought by her own hand. The blush of early flowers which thickly enamelled the garden, were literally the result of her own culture; the early lilac

which perfumed the apartment had been cherished by her through the severity of winter, and coaxed into premature bloom, to surprise her uncle, and make him forget the loss of his forcing-houses, or only remember them in order to prove that all things may be supplied by care and love; and chiefly, and above all, the joy she experienced at placing his favourite bunch of violets on his table, could not be compared with that which gold or jewels can afford.

From these innocent but evanescent delights, she turned with other sentiments of graver satisfaction to the orphans whom she had converted, not into fine lady playthings, but into tidy, active, useful children, so gentle, so well suited to fill their sphere in life with credit and comfort, that they were living proofs, not only of the endowments of her refined taste, but of her solid understanding; and bore testimony that these qualities are not necessarily incompatible, although they frequently are disjoined.

During the long winter nights, Lady Emily alternately plied her needle, or read aloud to the General, or sang to him his favourite songs; and as they retired to rest every night, when he kiss-

ed and blessed her, she regularly said, from her inmost heart—"Thank God for a day of happiness!"

Under her sweet influence, the General regained his serenity, and sometimes even shared in the pleasure she took in her garden; helped her to part the roots of her polyanthuses, (which she called her stationary butterflies, likening their velvet flowers to the mealy wings of those insects,) and smiling delightedly at the eager interest with which she invested the simplest pleasures; but still there was a canker in his heart's core, which could not be cast out altogether, till a higher power removed it thence. The only diversity which varied the nature of their employments and pursuits, was a letter now and then from Heatherden, and, in the course of the winter, about four from Lady Frances. These latter were dry and formal letters, with which there was nothing to find fault, but much to dislike, considering *from* whom they came, and *to* whom they were addressed. Their perusal never failed to sadden Lady Emily, and to cast a deeper gloom on the General's brow. There were other letters, too, received by General Montgomery,

which he always retired to read, and the contents of which Lady Emily knew were not to be imparted to her: although her almost filial solicitude for her dear uncle rendered this a cruel trial to her, yet she forebore to take any notice of a circumstance, in which at present, she was convinced, she could be of no use.

Winter had now completely passed away. The first snow-drop, the first crocus, nay even the last tuft of primroses that had bloomed by the unchained spring, were gone. Already the infancy of flowers had lapsed into their childhood; and the violet flung its rich fragrance far and wide upon the vagrant breeze. Once, again, the green spike of the corn waived upon the upland, the lark once again tuned his aspiring minstrelsy high poized in air; while the throstle, and the blackbird with its golden beak, sought the lanes and hollows, busying themselves in forming habitations for their young, amid the fencing thorns of the pink-budded hawthorn.

After a long ramble one afternoon, when Lady Emily had climbed the highest uplands which overlook the Severn, she felt fatigued, and sat down to enjoy the delightful rest which follows

exertion, by the side of one of those fresh welling springs which burst from the bosom of the earth, as though they were spirits of life and gladness endowed with power to cherish and adorn the lands through which they hold their fertilizing course; and as she contemplated its bright and gurgling waters, she felt the language which thus spake in their silent eloquence; and then, as her eyes wandered far off over the sea-like Severn, a sudden vision flashed before her fancy of the Dorsetshire coast, of the last year's Spring, and of her first interview with Lord Mowbray. Nature itself seemed to hold up the mirror to her, which reflected the circumstances as vividly, as though she saw them in reality.

"Ah!" she said, sighing, "those *were* happy days, happier than the present; but we are not to ask *why* the former days were better than these, for we do not reason wisely concerning these things. Oh! no, not wisely; but the heart will sometimes rebel, and will unawares lift us as it were out of ourselves, and carry us back to past scenes, to linger there precisely where we had better not pause one moment."

Thus did Lady Emily mingle reason with feeling; but the remembrance of her first interview with Lord Mowbray could not, would not, be effaced. The vagrant hat which he redeemed; her amusement in seeing it fly over hedge and dale, eluding his pursuit; their subsequent acquaintance; their growing intimacy; the little mystery of the fording the streamlet, too rudely and too soon disclosed—all these, together with a distinct recollection of the air, the mein, the tone of voice, of him whom she imagined held no longer any place in her remembrance, rushed over with a subduing power, and chained her back to all the pleasures, and all the pains of memory.

Not that Lady Emily had never thought of Lord Mowbray till now. Oh, no—he had, after her first quitting London, too constantly and too painfully occupied her mind. She had blamed, and exonerated him alternately in regard to his conduct towards herself, and she had but too carefully taken note in her heart's tablet of every gesture, every look, every half-broken expression, which had implied a history of sentiments and

whole chronicles of feelings. With the aid, however, of mortified pride, that delicate pride of the heart's first purity which

"Would be wooed and not unsought be won,"

she had sedulously stifled and veiled these intruding thoughts, till she supposed them banished for ever; but there are attachments, indigenous as it were to the human heart, which, like that of certain plants to particular spots, after they are cut off and dug out root and branch, will throw forth suckers from some hidden fibres as tenacious of the soil as though they had remained the cherished tenants of the ground, and been suffered to form themselves into gigantic trees. Where these exist, they may be repelled, crushed, torn, mutilated, defaced; but they will adhere to their position while the breath of life remains, destined, perhaps, to flourish hereafter.

Certain it is, that a vision of Lord Mowbray stood before Lady Emily, as vividly portrayed as though some wizard had evoked it on purpose to trouble that serenity which she had so wisely endeavoured to attain; and by the time she

reached her home, she was as languid and fatigued as though she had walked beyond her strength. In vain she endeavoured to rally herself from this overcoming and unreasonable depression, and to talk to her uncle cheerfully of the beauty of the season and the scene. Her wits wandered; her words did not flow naturally; and General Montgomery once or twice asked her if she were not well. To dispel this his anxiety, she proposed to read him his favourite Evelyn's "Sylva;" she fixed her eyes on the page, and her thoughts floating any where rather than engaged on her actual employment, she wondered why the history of her dear forest tribes no longer possessed the power to interest, or rivet her attention. Still she continued to read, and she saw that the inquiring glances which her uncle sent forth from time to time on her countenance, became less frequent, as the quiet music of her voice soothed him into the belief, that whatever had occurred to agitate her, had subsided; and under this impression, he suffered himself to be beguiled into his afternoon's slumber.

When he dropped asleep, Lady Emily paused; but observing him about to awake she resumed

her book, and, with patient pertinacity, courted the soundness of his slumber by continuing, in her ringdove murmuring voice, to read on, till she was startled by hearing a rustling among the leaves of the woodbine that encircled the window. At the same moment, her favourite greyhound startled from its cushion, and, rushing furiously towards the spot, leaped on the table which stood beneath the casement, barking loudly.

The General awoke; Lady Emily laid aside her book, and, running to the door, called in considerable alarm to their servant Edwards to know if any stranger had approached their dwelling, when she recollected with some anxiety that he had that day gone to Bristol. At the same moment, she found herself running against a person whose well-known voice thrilled to her very soul; and the next instant Lord Mowbray himself advanced, apologizing for his abrupt intrusion.

"It is indeed," he said, "I fear, almost inadmissible to have taken such a liberty, but I met Edwards by chance in Bristol;" (he blushed as he spoke;) "and learning from him that Lady Emily and you, my dear Sir, were living so

near, I could not resist the pleasure of making these inquiries in person: may I hope to be pardoned?"

General Montgomery's manner in a moment dispelled any fears he might have entertained of not being a welcome visitor; and a glance that he stole at Lady Emily, although it did not speak security of welcome, still satisfied him that he was at least no indifferent person. After the first agitation and surprise of meeting had passed away, each party recovered their composure, and soon felt as though they had never been separated.

There is a linking affinity in some souls which makes them unite, after absence, as though they had been unnaturally severed, and belonged of right to each others' society and communion. Thus it was with the present circle. Lord Mowbray's peculiar gentleness of manner, the winning tone of his voice, were in consonance with the General's tastes; and as he spoke of things, not of people, of interests and not of events, of thoughts and feelings, not of the news of the day, there was no reference made to harsh or grating subjects; no idle cloven-foot of curiosity peeping out, to offend or hurt General

Montgomery's feelings, but all that could interest and soothe him.

Once, when Lady Emily inquired for her sister, Lord Mowbray looked distressed; said that London was so wide a place that persons might live in it years and never meet; that he had gone little into that gay world in which Lady Frances lived; and that he really had hardly ever seen her. But General Montgomery was not deceived by this evasive answer—his countenance was overcast, and a pause ensued in the hitherto delightful conversation.

Lord Mowbray first resumed the discourse, by observing that he had made an unconscionably long visit, and must now take his leave, although to him the moments had gone by so agreeably; that he had forgotten they might not be similarly computed by others; and he ventured to steal one of his soft pleading glances at Lady Emily, whose heart shone in her radiant countenance, as she replied, that she was sure her uncle had been much gratified by his remembrance of them; "and I——:" she stopped, hesitated, and taking up some violets that lay on the table, seemed to

imply, that had she uttered her sentiments, they would have been of the sweetest import.

It was thus, at least, that the delighted Lord Mowbray interpreted her confusion; and, as if in haste to prevent any regular cold compliment of usage from lips unpractised in insincerity, but perhaps obliged, in conformity with custom, to veil the real impulse of her heart, he hastened to thank her with his eloquent eyes, while he said—

"And now I have a boon to prefer, which I must venture to make known before I go; although I have its success so much at heart, that I really feel considerable dismay, lest it should meet a refusal."

Lady Emily's heart beat high; and she moved to a little distance, and busied herself in arranging some books, in order to avoid observation. The General made an encouraging reply, and Lord Mowbray proceeded to request that Lady Emily and her uncle would do him the honour of coming to pass some time at Mowbray Castle.

"I have," he said, "endeavoured to render it not wholly unworthy of such guests; and there

are some wild scenes along the coast, which, to a lover of picturesque and bold landscape, would not, I flatter myself, be devoid of interest. Our trees, indeed, we cannot boast of; still, in narrow sheltered gorges there is some wood; and my gardens are, I hope, not despicable, considering that they are only of a year's cultivation."

The General seemed rather pleased with the proposal; still he did not entirely accept or decline the invitation; and as Lord Mowbray was pressing his suit with earnestness, Edwards entered, and whispered to the former that it had come on a sad rainy night, and "would it not be better if my Lord would put up with such accommodation as the farm afforded, instead of returning to Clifton through the wet?"

"Well thought of, Edwards," said General Montgomery. "I had already settled that point in my own mind. Certainly we will not suffer Lord Mowbray to leave us to-night, if he will allow us to constrain him to remain. I am afraid he will not find his apartment very commodious, but——"

"Oh! as to that, any apartment here will be delightful."

The word delight escaped him ere he was aware; superlatives he did not deal in—"*Car la parole est toujours reprimée quand le sujet surmonte le disant*"—and he endeavoured to do it away, by adding, "the luxury of my room is not what I ever regard; but I fear I shall be troublesome, and—I am obliged, indeed I am, to return."

"Nay, now, my good Lord," said General Montgomery, "not obliged *positively*, I hope; let me persuade you to stay. Emily, join your intreaties to mine."

"Do, Lord Mowbray, stay," said Lady Emily timidly, "and see the improvements we have made about this place by daylight. It was a mere farm-house when we came to it. I shall be proud to show you what a little industry can effect."

"And well she may; for indeed, my Lord, my niece is my guardian angel, who makes every place a Paradise with her smiles and her sweet content. You will not, I trust, refuse to see some

specimens of her art, by remaining with us at least to-night."

It may be guessed that Lord Mowbray yielded to his own wishes, and to his friends' entreaties; and it was settled to the satisfaction of all parties that he should remain at the farm.

And now, how gay appeared the heavy pattering of the rain, and how very cheerful was the increased lowering of the skies, which seemed to bespeak the impossibility of turning out even an enemy to its inclement influence! It is the sun within the breast, whose shining or withdrawing beams gladden or depress our hearts, and even change seasons and scenes to our moral mental view.

As the General's composure and confidence in Lord Mowbray's society were confirmed, he ventured to ask after old acquaintances and friends; for he felt an inward security that he would not presume upon their intimacy, or make such questions an excuse for prying rudely into the cause of his present situation, or, in fine, touch upon any point which might wound his feelings. He inquired, therefore, with great apparent interest, of Mrs. Neville, of Mr. Altamont, of Lady Glassington, of

Colonel Pennington. The only one of our friends who seem not to have forgotten us, yourself, my Lord, excepted, has been Miss Macalpine; she writes frequently to my niece."

"Oh!" replied Lord Mowbray, "I too have several capital letters from that good lady. She has not certainly studied Madame de Sevigné's art in vain, although she has perfectly preserved her own originality. To tell the truth, at a first reading I do not always understand her letters; but, after due consideration, there is ever some leading point which guides me to her meaning, and that meaning is well worth taking trouble to get at."

"Yes," said General Montgomery, "I have ever thought, that whatever is devoid of affectation, and at the same time is full of matter, must be always interesting, and such are truly the characteristics of our worthy Alpinia's letters."

Lady Emily added a word of warmer commendation, and they all felt that each one seemed inclined to like and be pleased with what was approved of by the other.

In this perfect harmony of thoughts and feelings, the evening passed on winged hours; and Edwards

having sent for Le Brun, who arrived with his Lord's luggage, he found himself established, as it were, once more under General Montgomery's roof, not as a mere passing guest, but as though he were one of the family. Pleasure, like pain, will banish sleep; and Lord Mowbray, under the consciousness of extreme happiness, passed as restless and feverish a night as though sorrow had strewn thorns on his pillow. Even happiness pays the penalty of its *human* nature; and beyond the even tenour of a peaceful consciousness of rectitude, there is no transport here below which does not, in its extreme, tend to pain.

Lady Emily on her part was not less agitated by the thousand pleasurable and vague imaginations which floated before her—but with this difference, no cloud of self-reproach whatever, beyond such imperfections as attach to all mortals, cast its shadow across her path—no past regrets for hours mispent, or affections misdirected, or promises broken, threw its imperfection upon the tissue of the silken web she wove. Still there was too much of trembling anxiety, too much of eager hope, to allow her the calm possession of herself. When she opened one of her good books, as was

her usual custom every night, in order to compose her thoughts before she knelt in prayer, she found it difficult to sober them sufficiently to be able to follow the sense of the page, and then she said—"Oh! if happiness is thus to unfit me for duty, what would grief not do? and, as my good uncle has often said to me—'wretched is that being who is too happy or too miserable to lift his thoughts in prayer to Heaven.' Ought I not to fear, that if I prove thus unworthy of felicity it will be taken from me? How dare I hope for its continuance, if I am thus dazzled by its approach?"

Nor did she reason thus in vain: for, with the earnest desire of deserving the blessing, the power of doing so returned; and then sweet indeed became the chastened purity of that happiness which subsided in gentle and refreshing slumbers.

When Lord Mowbray arose the next morning, his senses were greeted with the fragrance of the sweet brier and the song of the birds, together with all those sounds of rustic life which, though they speak of industry and labour, come not to the ear with the money-getting avidity which the cries of a populous city awaken in the mind. Lord

Mowbray felt lightened to have escaped from these, and invigorated by the air of heaven, which blew refreshingly into his room. A brilliant sun illumined the drops which hung upon the leaves, the only vestiges of the last night's storm; and he felt his heart bounding with a joyousness from the consciousness of an upright and definite purpose to which he had long been a stranger—indeed, which he had never before truly known: for, whatever enchantment resides in scenes of beauty, or in the powers of fascination, there is no true peace when the principle from whence that enchantment and that fascination spring, is not in itself pure and stedfast; when it does not tend to some ultimate end, which is sanctioned by virtue, and followed up perseveringly. The thought of his own errors led to such reflections as these, while the salutary compunction of conscience smote him to the heart, and overshadowed the brightness of the present moment, but only did so to render him more deserving of recalling it hereafter.

It may be easily guessed that Lord Mowbray did not go away the next day—nor the next. General Montgomery really could not part with

him; and Lady Emily's eyes said as much at least twenty times in the day. Then came long walks and rides, on such ponies or horses as the country afforded; and there was the delight of scrambling up and down difficult passes, and over bad roads, and of running and leaping lightly across some difficult step, ere Lord Mowbray could tender his assistance.

In Lady Emily, the gaiety of youthful spirits was united to the most perfect feminine gentleness; and to this rare union of seemingly contradictory graces, were superadded those richer treasures of mind which fade not with youth, but carry on their blessed influence into all the details of common life, the unenchanted regions of reality, the trials of sickness, and the depression of advancing years. These charms formed a combination of vivid interest around the very atmosphere of Lady Emily, which made a deeper impression every succeeding hour on Lord Mowbray's heart.

At such times as her absence left the General and Lord Mowbray alone together, the former found in his companion an attentive listener to his praises of his niece, a theme on which he was never weary of descanting; and with what

deep and heartfelt interest did the latter attend to minute accounts of all she had effected, and all she intended to effect for the amelioration of the state of such persons as it was in her power to serve, for the improvement of the farm on which they resided, and for the benefit of its proprietor.

" I assure you, my dear Lord, that where my skill and knowledge in agriculture have been of the smallest service, Emily's unwearying assiduity has effected twice as much; and the children she has had under her tuition, are living proofs of what a female mind can do when it is directed by sound sense. She is indeed, my dear Lord, a creature of a most felicitous nature, and may truly be said to be

> ' Blest with a temper whose unclouded ray
> Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.' "

Lord Mowbray's eyes glistened through a tear of rapture as he replied—" You are to be envied, General, in the possession of so rich a treasure"—and he sighed deeply.

Several days elapsed, yet still the parting day was always postponed; at length Lord Mowbray,

with an agitation and earnestness that could not be misunderstood, intreated the General to lend a favourable ear to his invitation, and to allow him to be himself their escort to Mowbray Castle.

"What say you, Emily love, to my Lord's proposal?" asked the General: "methinks it were uncourteous longer to resist a request so graciously preferred. You shall decide the question, my dear niece;—there, Lord Mowbray, plead your own suit."

"I dare not," he said tremulously.

"Oh!" cried Lady Emily, putting aside her harp, and coming towards him, "surely you are convinced that if my dear uncle's health permit him to undertake the journey, it will give me the greatest pleasure to accompany him."

"That is really most gracious and most sweet," rejoined Lord Mowbray; "and you will promise then, Lady Emily, to confer this favour on me?"

"The favour, I am sure," said General Montgomery, "is mutual, my dear Lord; and I can only say, that for my own part I know no other person alive to whose house I should feel inclined to go. Little did I think, ten days past, that I should leave this abode to visit any where; but

we are very ignorant of what a day may bring forth. Pleasure and pain are dealt out to us, in measures and at seasons we little dream of, by a Power whose wisdom we dare not question; and if the latter is to be received with resignation, the other surely should be welcomed with gladness. Let us then prepare gaily for our agreeable excursion, and lose no time in doing so. Do you, my Lord, name the day for our departure, and we will give orders to have all things in readiness."

"Well then, General, will the day after to-morrow be too soon? perhaps Lady Emily may not—"

"Not at all," replied General Montgomery; "delays are dangerous; besides, an old soldier is always ready, you know; and my Emily never made me wait one moment for any frivolous female paraphernalia. You can be ready, love, can you not?"

"Oh! in an hour's time if you wish it, dear uncle."

The ordering horses, procuring a carriage, and various other arrangements, were, however, necessarily to be made; and filled up the intervening hours which preceded that of their departure.

"Do you know," observed Lady Emily to Lord Mowbray, as they walked round her little garden, the last evening of their sojourn at the farm—"do you know, though I have the greatest pleasure in accompanying my uncle to your castle, I shall leave this place with regret; for though I was, I confess, very melancholy when I first arrived, yet I have enjoyed so many tranquil, happy hours, that I shall think I am leaving a friend when I go away; besides, there is always a doubt what I shall think when I return here: the place probably will be the same; but shall I be the same?"

She asked this question in the innocence of her heart, and with an expression of doubting interest, as she looked in Lord Mowbray's countenance, which was to his feelings singularly enchanting.

"To my idea," he said, "you cannot change for the better; I trust, therefore, that you will not be changed."

She laughed, and replied, "You know not what you say, my Lord. Consider how short a time you have been acquainted with me; how can you know my real character?"

"Short! Lady Emily! Ay, short in one sense of the word—but long, very long, in another.

Do you know, Lady Emily, that a year has elapsed since I first saw you? Then there is another way of computing time, an indescribable intuitive sense of feeling that one has been intimately acquainted all one's life. Such is my feeling in regard to you. I hope it is not presumptuous. Does the remembrance of our first interview ever return to your mind, for from mine it has never been absent?"

"Yes, I remember it well; my hat gave you a vast deal of trouble; but you caught it at last."

Lord Mowbray knew well enough that Lady Emily attached no other meaning to these words than that which they implied; yet, falling on his ear, they thrilled through every vein with a sensation of foreboding happiness impossible to describe. They seemed to him to be oracular; and the "you caught it at last," was murmured by him that night as he fell asleep on his pillow.

Change of scene, argue as we may in behalf of constancy of attachment to localities, is invigorating to the moral, mental, and physical constitution of our being. It is like the new potting of plants, which droop a little at first on being disturbed, but imbibe a fresh portion of vitality afterwards. General Montgomery's whole being evinced the

truth of this observation; for, in the progress of their journey, he returned to his own original serenity and cheerfulness; and Lady Emily observed, with a satisfaction which enhanced her own pleasure, that the cause of his depression of spirits, whatever it might be, seemed for the time obliterated.

As for Lord Mowbray, he was a different creature, and seemed to have cast off the slough of despondency and querulousness which had marred the graces of his higher qualities. All that had been cynical or questionable in his manner or conversation had given place to an openness and cordiality to all around him, which set off his character in a new and captivating point of view; nor was this change lost on General Montgomery, who remarked it to his niece.

They arrived at Mowbray Castle by moonlight, but one of those very bright moonlights which give the greatest interest to scenery, and precisely that species of interest suited to the peculiarity of the place. The mystery of shadow, the grandeur of a broad flood of light, lying like a mantle of glory on the ocean, and touching the outlines of the building with a delicate tracery of

silver,—Lady Emily saw all these, and made an exclamation of surprise.

"Why you had not prepared us for any thing so sublime," said General Montgomery. "I knew the coast was bold, and the ocean is always fine; but here is a combination of objects calculated to strike the beholder with admiration."

"If you had seen this place a year ago, my dear General, I flatter myself you would have given me some credit for the improvements I have adopted in and about the Castle. The site, indeed, was made to my hand, and I had every reason to be satisfied with it in its majesty of desolate grandeur; but the building was going to decay, the roads were almost impassable, and the whole scene was more calculated for a castle in romance, than an abode of comfort in real life. I flatter myself, also, that the moral state of my tenantry is considerably amended, and that I have not quite so questionable a crew around me as there were on my first arrival here; for I have good reason to believe that this place was little better than a rendezvous for smugglers, who were considerably disturbed by my making it an habitual residence."

"Ah! my good Lord," replied the General, "if great landed proprietors were conscientious lords and guardians of the domains assigned to them by Providence, there would be much less temptation or opportunity for nefarious practices, and much more powerful stimulus to industry; for the natural circumstances arising out of the presence and daily life of a gentleman residing on his estate would give bread to thousands who otherwise become the scourge and refuse of the land."

"Yes," said Lord Mowbray, "and a temporary hasty visit now and then will not do; it is the mutual interchange of benefits between the different classes of society; the habit and intimacy, so to express myself, which exist between a man and his tenantry, which produce that kindly attachment so beneficial to the true interests of both, and for which there is no substitute. These ties are loosened, and in time wholly lost, if constant presence does not maintain their vigour."

"I agree with you, my dear Lord; woe be to that woman, who, for any selfish views of gratification whatever, induces her husband to

forego his true interest, and makes him lose his dignity and his consequence by neglecting the duties of his station; and miserable is that man who, from ease of temper, or the fatal rust of indolent habit, suffers himself to be so blinded, so misled. He will awake to feel his insignificance when it is too late, or sink into utter oblivion, and drop into an unhonoured grave."

"Surely," said Lady Emily, "there are not many such; for it is so natural to love what is one's own; and I cannot understand a wife's not being delighted to evince her attachment by following her husband wherever his interests may call him."

The General shook his head with a mournful smile, saying—"There is such a thing as selfishness in the world, though you know it not, my Emily."

"I have always," replied Lord Mowbray, "regarded it as the most criminal conduct to neglect the birthplace of one's ancestors. It is like quitting the post that is assigned to us, and leaving it a defenceless prey to the enemy; and it delights me to hear that Lady Emily is of my opinion."

The General appeared distressed by the turn

the conversation had now taken, and turned away to hide his emotion.

After the first arrival of the party at the Castle, the arrangements for the guests being finally made, and their comfort and pleasure carefully provided for, General Montgomery and his niece felt that the delicate solicitude of Lord Mowbray to render them at home in his house, did really effect that most difficult of all purposes; for even where the intention is perfectly genuine and sincere, it is rare indeed but that the too little or too much of pains, does not defeat its own intention. In the present instance, this was not the case.

The General's apartment was contiguous to Lady Emily's, and somewhat apart from the rest of the Castle, in a wing that extended along the edge of the highest part of the rocks, in the latter of which a terrace was formed, that was sheltered by hardy evergreens, and decorated with a profusion of flowers. From the window of Lady Emily's dressing-room, there were steps leading to this delightful walk; and the General and his niece might here conceive themselves to be as completely retired from the main building as though they had been miles away from it.

It was impossible that General Montgomery

should not be impressed with the delicate and unwearied assiduity of Lord Mowbray to render his sojourn in his house delightful, and he appeared really to have recovered his former self; while the many opportunities afforded to Lady Emily of becoming more intimately acquainted with Lord Mowbray's amiable qualities, the exhaustless stores of his intellectual powers, and the endearing consciousness of their being entirely devoted to her and to her happiness, confirmed and justified that growing attachment which had, since their first acquaintance, been an unknown inmate in her breast. In this state of things, time passed through its wonted evolutions of hours, days, and weeks, unheeded, but left traces of its flight, in which the happiness of the parties was deeply involved.

The many walks and rides about the coast afforded new interest every day to their rambles, had any other been required than that which they derived from themselves; but perhaps none of the scenes, however fine, conveyed half the pleasure to Lady Emily as did the open upland where she had first seen the lord of the domain, and where she now found a very beautiful building

erected, commanding an extensive prospect, and containing within its walls a fresco of no mean merit, where the incident it was intended to commemorate was treated with a tasteful and masterly hand.

Lady Emily uttered an exclamation of delighted surprise on seeing this decided proof of remembrance, and she felt that confusion of happiness which seeks refuge in silence.

"You are not displeased," said Lord Mowbray, "I trust you are not?"

"*You know* I am not," was the smiling, soft reply. And at that moment the General, having alighted from his horse, entered the pavilion; and, while he admired the whole building, his attention was quickly drawn to the fresco.

"Ah! what have we here?" said he, holding up his hand to shade his eyes from the light; "this is indeed an uncommon work of art in our country; this breathes of other climes: I think, my Lord, it is not difficult to guess the wizard who has conveyed the treasure here;" and then, having descanted on its beauties, he added, "Do you know, I think there is a resemblance to Emily in that female figure."

"I must have had a felicitous inspiration, indeed," replied Lord Mowbray, "if such is really the case; perhaps there is something in the air, but a copy must not be looked at by the side of an original. That is hardly fair, you know; so, if you please, General, we will resume our ride."

The General had not so forgotten past times as not to feel there was a little mystery lurking in this story, and he was too tender, too delicate, to unfold it rudely; so these three happy persons continued their morning rambles, in their own delight enjoying the happiness reflected from each other.

On their return to the Castle, they were equally surprised and pleased to find Colonel Pennington, whose figure it was impossible to mistake, enjoying his favourite amusement, looking through a spying-glass at some vessels in the offing. In the first moment of recognition, smiles and welcomes alone prevailed; but suddenly the General's brow was overcast, as he remembered that never once had his friend written to inquire for him, or made any attempt to see him, since they had parted at Montgomery Hall: this fact was too painful to the Ge-

neral's heart to be passed by as a circumstance of indifferent moment.

"Well, Pennington," said he, "I do confess I did not think you had been the man to remind me of the truth of the old proverb, 'Out of sight out of mind;' you seem glad enough to see us now at Mowbray Castle: but at Bentley Farm——"

"And how the deuce was I to know you were at Bentley Farm? who ever heard of the place, or was to imagine you had gone hiding yourself about the country? Why, if I had not cross-questioned your agent, I might never have found you out at all; as it is, I have had a pretty wild-goose chase after you, and when I reached the farm, you were flown. I *have* found you, however, at last, and I have business of some moment to converse with you about; therefore——"

"Nay, now, my dear Colonel, a truce with business till after dinner," said Lord Mowbray; "come in and look about you, and take some rest, and allow General Montgomery to do so likewise."

Lord Mowbray obtained this forbearance from the Colonel with considerable difficulty; but the dinner proved more silent, and far less agreeable,

than any which had taken place previously at the Castle. The General was evidently depressed, the Colonel big with some business which hardly allowed him to swallow down a few hasty mouthfuls, and his audible sighs interrupted all Lady Emily's endeavours to restore the wonted sunshine of the party. Lord Mowbray too felt distressed. He knew not what to think, or to what cause to attribute the dejection and agitation of his guests, but was conscious that the strange unaccountable behaviour of Colonel Pennington infected him likewise with gloom.

The fine sunset of a spring evening invited the party to go out on the terrace, and the Colonel having seized General Montgomery's arm, walked him away at a quick pace to a bench at the farther end of the parapet, and there sitting down, requested him to lend him his serious attention. The General bowed his head in token of assent, and the following colloquy took place.

"General, pardon my abruptness, but you are a disgraced man! Yes, Sir, disgraced for ever, unless you declare to the world publicly the truth of the history of the Mask."

"Pennington, I thought you had given me

your word never to mention this subject to me again; and I regard it as an affront and a breach of friendship that you do so: from any other man breathing except yourself, I would resent it as an insult never to be overlooked."

The General made a movement to rise. "Nay, General," cried his friendly persecutor, "you stir not," holding him forcibly down, "till you have heard me." And he proceeded: "You may bear quietly to be called a murderer, and because you do not hear the words, suppose you are an honourable man, with an unsullied name; but I—I will not bear it for you."

"What mean you, Pennington?"

"Mean? why I mean what I say. There is not a society in London where the mysterious affair of General Montgomery's adventure with the Mask has not been talked over; not an impertinent gossip who has not bewailed Lady Emily's hard fate, saying, 'Well, I am sorry for the poor thing; how is she fallen from her high estate! it is, to be sure, a sad misfortune to be the niece and ward of a man to whom a crime of so deep a dye is imputed:' 'Poor thing! she 's blasted for life,' adds another: 'No man will think of marrying

her,' says a third, looking with delight at his four unmarried daughters, and thinking there is one rival out of the way. 'Lady Frances is well out of the scrape. How fortunate she was! but you see even the good-natured Lord Bellamont avoids all communication with General Montgomery.' Then another group of people came up to the last speaker to inquire the meaning of the words they caught imperfectly; the story is repeated, and loses nothing in the repetition; the fact of the disappearance of the Mask is averred to be true, and I have been appealed to,—yes, I, your friend, bursting with indignation, and uttering execrations and defiance in their teeth, have been called upon to disprove the fact, if I could—think of that, General, *if I could!* Then I have been pitied alternately, and commended for being so staunch a friend; laughed at and sneered at by others, as being an injudicious partizan, whose very violence and zeal defeated their own end. Yes, Sir, all this is true, and all this have I borne with what patience you may guess;—nay, I challenged one man for his insolence, and he absolutely refused to accept my challenge, and assigned as a reason, he saw no necessity for committing

one murder, because another had been perpetrated. There, General, there 's for you! and here you are as unconcerned as though this question were not one of vital interest, as though your honour were not attacked, and as though the happiness of every individual who loves you were not implicated in this tremendous accusation!"

"Softly, Pennington; moderate, I beseech you, this intemperate language, which I know flows from a kind and honourable motive, but which it is impossible for me to hear any longer. I have mastered *my* feelings sufficiently to listen to you with outward composure: I think you may subdue *yours* so as to attend to my reply. What you have related to me shocks and wounds me—how deeply, I leave your own breast to tell you, but it does not *appal* me. I have long foreseen, that a man who falls from his position in life would become the scoff and prey of the malevolent and idle, and I am prepared to bear the ignominy with which I am branded; but should it even be the occasion of my death, as I believe it will, mine is a secret which must for ever lie buried in my grave. I thank you for all you have done; I thank you for all you have

felt for me; but the evil is irremediable and must be met with firmness and resignation."

"What! and do you intend," cried Colonel Pennington, rising into fresh indignation,—"do you intend to drag down your innocent niece into the pit where you are so calmly contented to fall yourself? Do you intend to cover all those with the reflection of your disgrace, who love and honour you;—yes, honour you in despite of all appearances?—do you mean to do this, when by a word you might (for I am sure you might) dispel at once the accusation with which you stand implicated?—remember, General, that I tell you for the last time, that by this obstinacy you forfeit all right to have a friend!"

"My good, noble-hearted Pennington, I acknowledge the apparent justice of your reasoning; but I solemnly repeat, that under the existing circumstances which bind me to secrecy, I would sooner, far sooner, die, than disclose the transactions of that dreadful night. Yet, since the cruel world has so judged me, I will not involve in my own ruin those dearer to me than myself. I shall inform Emily of all you have communicated to me, and as soon as I can collect my thoughts suffi-

ciently to arrange my plans, I will look out for some eligible protection for her, and then stand forth alone and unaided to abide the storm, rage as it may. Lord Mowbray, I had hoped, might have been—but now that is over!—Poor, dear, angelic Emily!—No, no, Lord Mowbray too must be made acquainted with the subject of your discourse; he too must learn to look at me with doubt and suspicion. The task be mine, Pennington, to make this disclosure."

"What!" cried the Colonel, starting to his feet, and once again arresting the General, as he was walking away: "hold—hold! what, a man criminate himself! why, the law itself does not demand that of you, or of any one; keep your own counsel as long as you can; but, oh! it will too soon follow you; the dreadful story will too soon follow you, wherever you go—" and away stalked the Colonel, swinging his arms, and muttering to himself like one half distracted.

"Excellent creature!" ejaculated the General, as he looked after him; "but his sufferings are light, when compared in the balance with mine own."

At this moment, Lady Emily came forward to meet him, with a joyous bounding step. "Sum-

mer is now really come," she said, as she took her uncle's arm, " and every thing looks beautiful and gay." Her eyes for the first time reverted from the landscape she was drawing, to rest on her uncle's countenance, and there she read how cruelly misplaced her observation was; when, suddenly catching the reflection of his sorrow, she added, " but not so if any thing has grieved you. My dearest Sir, speak! you are not well! or some sad tidings!—What of Frances,—tell me, I beseech you, what has happened?"

" Nothing of your sister, my Emily—nothing of her, rest assured, only a renewed impression of a dormant sorrow; and it is necessary, my dearest and best, that you should be acquainted with the cause, although it is an additional tax upon my fortitude to cloud the innocent joy of your feelings by the disclosure of mine."

" Tell me, dearest uncle, tell me quickly, I conjure you. Whatever it is, I may perhaps lighten, by sharing your grief—at all events, let me share it."

" Well, Emily, come to your apartment, and hear the melancholy truth I have to impart."

They walked in silence across the terrace and

entered the house. Lord Mowbray, who had followed them with his eyes, saw in the perturbed gesticulations of Colonel Pennington, and in the altered looks of Lady Emily and her uncle, as they passed him, that some event of no pleasurable kind had occurred. He retired, therefore, with an anxious mind to ruminate upon this sudden change. The uncle and the niece meanwhile were seated in their apartment, side by side; the General's hand fondly pressed in Lady Emily's, and her eyes riveted on his countenance.

"Now, dearest Sir, I am all attention, all anxiety; tell me, oh tell me!"

"Be composed, my love, and listen to me attentively; do not suffer your feelings to induce you to give a hasty or decided answer, which you might afterwards repent of, and then think it necessary to adhere to because it had been given from a point of mistaken honour; but allow your own good sense to act, and I shall be sure, in that case, that you will not form a wrong determination."

The General here detailed to her every thing that the Colonel had said to him; recapitulated the story of the mask, and aggravated rather

than softened the picture which he drew of the suspicions which attached to himself, and which by no insinuation whatever did he attempt to clear away.

Lady Emily sat the very picture of attentive interest; her colour varying, her eyes now sparkling with indignation, now suffused with tears, as the General spoke of his own irremediable disgrace, and of his misery in regard to that which it might cast upon every one connected with him by ties of consanguinity or friendship.

" Remember," he said, " my Emily, that when you made your election, and followed me in comparative poverty and retirement, you did not subject yourself to a *certainty* of contumely or reflected dishonour. Now, dearest, the whole terrible truth stands naked to our view; why should I fear to pronounce that accusation which I am not afraid to brave ? It is the deed, and not its name, which in every case should make us tremble. If you follow me now, you follow one who is accused of being a murderer !"

Several times, during the long and agonizing details made by General Montgomery, Lady Emily attempted to speak; but he stopped her,

by earnestly beseeching she would give him a patient attention till he had said all; and she obeyed, though it was pain and grief to her.

When at last he paused and awaited her answer, she began in a tremulous tone, which acquired firmness as she continued speaking:

"Dearest uncle, I seek not to penetrate your secret; far be it from me to suffer one impulse of prying curiosity to evince the least distrust in you. I respect your wishes and obey your orders in this as in all else, and am happy to be able to prove that my affection for you is steadfast, my confidence unbounded. The only personal pain I suffer is, that you for one instant should doubt my duty and my love. Under every circumstance, under every privation, I again repeat, that I will follow you over the world—you, whom I consider as my father. I will tend you in sickness, wait upon you in health, and so that I am not parted from you, I shall never think myself quite miserable, never think myself a useless, worthless being, so long as I can in the slightest degree contribute to your comfort; but to leave you, to be sent away from you——" and she knelt and embraced his knees as she spoke; "I

implore you, my dearest uncle, to promise me that that shall never be."

At first the General could not reply, save by folding her in his arms. At length, when he regained composure, he said, in a voice still suffocated by emotion—"'This is the last time I will ever offend you by a single doubt, the last trial I will ever make of your unshaken constancy and affection. You have loved me through good report and through evil report; you have, in the green and blossoming time of life, borne the shock of a tempest unmoved, that has uptorn many a long-rooted friendship of the growth of years. You have sacrificed all selfish advantages and pleasures in behalf of affectionate duty. You are a pearl of precious price, and fit jewel for a monarch's throne, or, what is better still, for the domestic happiness and honour of a good man's home."

This eulogium, which Lady Emily's heart and conscience could not but confirm, fell upon her ear like the sweetest music; and the uncle and the niece were at this moment happier, more completely blessed in each other, and in that perfect faith of true and pure affection, mutually entertained, than had they been gifted with all the

world deems great or prosperous, and had never known adversity.

"It is now become necessary that we leave this place," resumed the General, "and indeed, to take a note from that source whence all wisdom flows, it might have been wise, without this imperative reason, to remember the advice of 'Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he weary of thee, and so hate thee.' But whether this be the case in the present instance, or not, the information of Pennington leaves us no choice; our own humble dwelling is our only fit place of refuge. We will not, therefore, linger, dearest and best, or pause upon that which we know to be our duty; to-morrow we will quit Mowbray Castle. I am grieved thus to abridge you of a pleasure, poor dear child! the only one you are likely to enjoy during my lifetime; but you will be rewarded for all this self-denial, I am sure you will."

"I am, I am rewarded!" cried Lady Emily, tenderly kissing his hand, and they parted, happy in the confidence of mutual affection.

As Lady Emily had several arrangements to make, and her spirits had undergone a great shock, she felt that it would be necessary to pass the

remainder of her evening alone, in order to make those necessary preparations for departure which devolved entirely on her; she therefore sent her apology to her uncle for not re-appearing in the drawing-room.

By the time these preparations were completed, she was completely worn out, yet not sufficiently composed to retire to rest. The excitement of the last hours, which had borne her up, as it were, above herself, had now subsided, and left her in that languid state of exhausted depression which is unfavourable to sleep. She continued to sit musing by her open window, which led down by a few steps to the terrace; she inhaled the freshness of the sea air, impregnated with the perfume of the flower-beds over which it passed, and which had been cultivated with care to decorate that *particular terrace*, more than any of the others by which the Castle was surrounded. Casting her eyes upwards, Lady Emily gazed on the myriads of stars which appeared leading forth other trains of lesser stars, and her thoughts were borne up to that infinity, from the contemplation of which the mind sinks, inadequate to its aspirings, but yet sublimed and purified from the trifling cares of its

mortal career. The anguish occasioned by the recent disclosure of her uncle, the melancholy forebodings of her imagination, and even the pain of leaving Mowbray Castle, were all melted into one serious, tranquillized feeling, which rested with perfect trust and confidence in the mercy of Providence.

Thus placid and resigned, she thought a few turns in the open air would complete this frame of mind, and, wrapping her shawl about her, she stepped out on the balcony; but, for a moment, was deterred from proceeding by the sound of footsteps, which seemed to tread cautiously behind the window which projected in that part of the building, and prevented her from ascertaining the fact, had any one been there; but then again she listened, and all was silent.

"If my fancy did not deceive me," she said to herself, "it is only some of the stable-people, who have been later out than they ought, and have been passing this way to avoid being seen. How foolish I was to be afraid!" she continued, half aloud; and walked on, delighting in the sullen solemnity of the quiet but heavy waves breaking in awful monotony of sound upon the shelly

strand beneath. The objects before her, viewed through the uncertainty of starlight, appeared more vast and more mysterious from the broad depth of the shadows cast from the impending rocks.

Tempted by the interest of the scene, and the melancholy idea that she was perhaps gazing at it for the last time, she descended the steep path, cut in the rock, which conducted to the shore, and having reached the sands, she turned to admire the effect of the lights passing to and fro from the windows in the Castle, now high above her, when she was startled by the sound of a distant gun that reverberated along the shore; but recollecting that this was no uncommon occurrence, as the passing vessels frequently fired signals, she directed her eye to the spot whence the sound had proceeded, and thought she saw a small brig sailing in the dimness of the distance. She felt no farther alarm, and continued to stroll on the beach, when a second gun was fired, and at the same moment a sharp whistle, which seemed close at her ear, made her quickly seek, with trembling steps, to return towards the path which conducted to the Castle.

Suddenly she felt herself rudely seized by a man habited like a sailor, who rushed upon her, while, at the same moment, a handkerchief was held close to her mouth, and she was desired not to attempt to scream or struggle, as it would be useless; and if she were quiet, no harm whatever would happen to her. Indescribable and hopeless terror effected that which was desired of her, and she was borne away to a boat that lay concealed in a cove behind some rocks, in which other men were stationed. Hitherto Lady Emily's surprise and horror had prevented her making the least resistance; and the man who carried her, supposing she had fainted, placed her for a moment on the ground, while he caught a rope flung to him from his companions, in order to haul the boat nearer the shore; at this instant, with admirable presence of mind, Lady Emily leaped up, and with the swiftness of an arrow flew towards the steps leading to the Castle, crying in a loud voice for help:—a light figure, whom she recognized to be Lord Mowbray's, at that instant sprang forward, and leaped on the strand:—"Save me!" she cried, and dropped senseless in his arms.

Her pursuers at the same moment rushed upon her defender, and with a heavy laden bludgeon one of them dealt him a stroke, which, had it fallen upon his head, must have proved fatal; but it missed its aim, and only struck the shoulder of that arm which supported Lady Emily: as it fell powerless by his side, he caught her with dexterous activity upon the other. While struggling merely to hold her from the grasp of the ruffian who attempted to tear her from him, he must have been overcome, had not some person darted down behind them and fired upon his opponent. One groan, succeeded by a heavy fall, told what effect the shot had taken; and, at the same moment, various domestics appearing with flambeaux at the top of the rock, and descending the pathway rapidly with loud shouts, terrified any other of these desperadoes who might have been engaged in the villainous transaction, while the sound of the quick stroke of oars made known that they had already eluded pursuit. The same person who saved Lord Mowbray's life darted forwards and fired at the boat; the fire was returned, but fortunately the retreating tide which

bore the guilty beyond reach of danger, saved the innocent on shore.

Colonel Pennington and the General by this time arrived at the spot where this sudden but awful transaction had taken place; and their exclamations of alarm, mingled with inquiries, produced a scene of confusion which rendered it perfectly impossible, for a considerable time, to ascertain what had happened. The apparently lifeless body of Lady Emily; the speechless agony of Lord Mowbray, who had never resigned his precious burthen; the clamorous demands of Colonel Pennington to be informed of the cause of all this dismay, and the touching despair of General Montgomery, combined to complete the painful interest of the hour. Lady Emily, however, began to recover from her swoon, and she was the first person to be sufficiently collected to narrate what had befallen her.

"To Lord Mowbray," she said, "I am indebted for my rescue. Oh! my dear uncle, how shall we be ever able to repay him?"

"I am more than repaid at this moment," he answered; "now that I see you safe, now that I hear your voice."

"But yourself, my dear Lord," cried General Montgomery, "how fares it with you? are you hurt? you speak very faintly."

"I received a blow in my right arm, which pains me for the moment, but it will not be a matter of any consequence, only it might have disabled me from rescuing Lady Emily, had not fortunately some brave fellow come to my assistance. Where is he, that I may reward and thank him, as I am bound in gratitude to do?"

"Who saved Lord Mowbray? who saved my Lord?" cried many voices.

"It was I who had the luck to save his honour," cried one, who was modestly standing at some distance from the group, but now came forward. "Does not your Lordship remember Ben Hardy, whom you were so good as to get into the excise? and a blessing on you for that same—and I hopes as how your Lordship has not been badly hurt, though it was such a deadly blow, I thought it must have broken your arm."

"Broken! is Lord Mowbray's arm broken?" cried Lady Emily, and she burst into tears.

"Not so, not so," whispered Lord Mowbray in her ear; and tenderly pressing her to his

heart, for he had not yet relinquished supporting her with his one uninjured arm—"I feel no pain, I cannot be materially hurt, I am completely blessed."

"Why do we all stand talking here?" said Colonel Pennington, when the only thing to do, in order to ascertain the extent of Lord Mowbray's hurt, is to convey him quickly to the Castle, and then to save ourselves from catching our death of cold too; come, let us be gone. Ben Hardy also must come and tell us all he knows of this mysterious business."

Lady Emily declared herself quite well and able to walk; but when Lord Mowbray attempted to move, extreme agony prevented him. He was obliged to consent to be carried by his attendants. He was immediately conveyed to his chamber, a surgeon was sent for, and while the proper remedies were applied to his arm, the rest of the party were talking over the event.

Ben Hardy recounted that it was by mere accident he found himself on the spot, at the precise moment when his services were of such consequence.

"Ah!" said General Montgomery, "rather

say by the blessing of Providence. These accidents, as they are thoughtlessly called, have a high commission; but proceed."

"Why, General, you see, I frequently skulk about the shore at odd hours, to know if all's right, and I had lately some suspicion that a party of smugglers were at their old trade thereabouts; a vessel plying to and fro, much of the cut of one of their luggers, and a few signals, with an odd gun heard now and then o' nights, kept me on the alert, and I always takes care to be well armed, and so I need to be. Well, I was going my rounds here along shore, as luck would have it, when I hears one of them there guns fired: thinks I, my lads, there's more as know your ways than you thinks for. You been't popping in that there fashion for nothing; you have a boat's crew, I guess, here, or hereabouts; and with that, I lays to under the shade of the rocks just by, where Lady Emily came running along like a hunted deer, when my Lord sprang to her assistance, and then my pistols served me in good stead; and my eyes being used to see in the dark, I fired over Lord Mowbray's head, just as the

fellow was about to take a second aim. I winged him, and for the matter o' that, I thank God I did; for I not only saved his honour's life, but made a good riddance of the biggest villain that ever stepped."

"Do you know, then, who he was?" asked Colonel Pennington.

"Yes, I know'd him well enough—a smooth-tongued rascal; it was he that they called the Gentle Shepherd, but he was a wolf in sheep's clothing; fearful things has he done with his tiger's smile; but Ben Hardy has done for him; he's off to Davy's Locker, and not till he served his time to that same master neither. I have shot a man afore now in battle, and it has given me a kick in the heart; but I vow I'd ha' taken that fellow's life if he'd had nine on 'em, and never have flinched."

"But it could not have been those smugglers who were so eager to carry off Lady Emily," observed Colonel Pennington; "the story does not bear itself out: I don't understand it."

"If I may be so bold, your honour, as to contradict you—I don't know that, for they might

have thought to have got a great ransom for restoring the young Lady; such things has been done afore now on these coasts."

"Dreadful thought!" cried the General: "how fervent is my gratitude that this misfortune was spared me!"

"Humph!" said the Colonel with a groan, "it might have been an ugly affair enough; but tell me," he asked, addressing Lady Emily, "what business had you to go a star-gazing at the dead of night, young lady? those sort of vagaries never end in good. If you had been where you ought, namely, in bed, you would have been free from all danger. I do not approve of any of those romantic walks at undue hours; no good ever came of them, or ever will."

"Well, Pennington, your advice may be right; but it is not well-timed. Do you not see how fatigued and agitated Emily is? Retire to your chamber, love, and be sure to have me called if you are ill.—Oh! what a mercy that she is safe! how thankful I am!—Ben Hardy, you may leave us for the present, but the remembrance of your good services will never leave us, as you shall shortly be convinced."

"Yes, yes, General," said Colonel Pennington, "you have cause for thankfulness; but remember to keep a sharp look-out. Those who undertake the charge of women have always more to do than they can well manage."

"I am too happy to be angry with you, my good friend; so good-night, or rather good-morning, for the bad night has passed away, thanks be to Heaven!"

CHAPTER VII.

There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
The which observed, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE conjectures and probable reasons assigned for the outrage, formed an ample and interesting topic of discourse the next day, among all the domestics, as well as the masters of the family; but no satisfactory conclusion was the result of these their various opinions; and all that could be learned was, that the vessel, which had been hovering about in the Reach for some days, was seen beating out against wind and tide, at early dawn, and as the breeze freshened, and the tide turned, was soon out of sight.

The body of "*The Gentle Shepherd*" was of course found where it dropped, and a coroner's inquest called to ascertain the cause of his death. Few persons indeed cared about it, except to rejoice at the event; for he was the terror of all the country people in the neighbourhood, who had looked upon him with superstitious dread.

The General, who had hardly closed an eye all night, was aroused to a fresh sense of anxiety, by finding that the shock Lady Emily had undergone, together with exposure to the night air, had produced considerable fever; and though she endeavoured to make light of her indisposition, to avoid giving him pain, he saw directly through the kindness of the motive, but could not be deceived. He besought her, therefore, not to attempt getting up, and recommended her keeping herself perfectly quiet, comforting her at the same time, by saying—"Lord Mowbray, I am happy to tell you, is going on as well as possible; and the surgeon assures us, that in a few days he will be able to go about as usual. We have every possible cause for thankfulness; and I do intreat, my dearest and best, that you will yield to my wishes,

and take care of yourself, in order that we may all meet in comfort shortly."

Lady Emily was compelled to yield to this tender solicitude, not only from motives of obedience, but real illness; and during some days, the General had little else to do than pass from the chamber of one of the invalids to the other, and comfort them by the favourable accounts which he mutually conveyed. To each he softened the sufferings of the other: the kind words of Lady Emily, and her undisguised solicitude, thus faithfully reported to Lord Mowbray, proved greater emollients to soothe pain, than any which the healing art could afford.

So far all was satisfactory; but the unavoidable *tête-à-têtes* of Colonel Pennington and General Montgomery were of a distressing nature; the coldness of *friends* is ice itself; the heart is cut by its keen severity. Colonel Pennington sometimes groaned audibly, and continued to pace up and down the room like a troubled ghost; then he would suddenly stop and say abruptly:—

"Well, and now matters have been brought to a climax, and that Lord Mowbray will, in all probability, propose for Lady Emily—what will you

do? what can you do? *circumstanced as you are?*" and laying a strong emphasis on the latter words.

"It is time enough, my good Pennington—it is time enough to think of how I shall act, when that circumstance takes place—should it take place! The first thing to be thought of, is the recovery of my niece; the next, her immediate removal home to the farm-house."

"What! and so you really mean to take her away, and deprive her of the last chance she has of ever getting well settled? truly you are unaccountable.—Yet perhaps you may just as well do so. Lord Mowbray is a man who values the nobility of his descent, and its unsullied honour too highly, to marry the niece of one enveloped in a mystery which——"

"Pennington, I can bear a great deal from a person whose character I value so highly as I do yours; but there are limits beyond which no man can endure to be taunted even by his best friend. We must meet no more, in order to avoid the recurrence of this irritation; or meeting, we must cease altogether to converse, till such time as you have learned to repress your feelings, and to be silent on this subject."

Having thus spoken, he was about to leave the room, when Colonel Pennington caught hold of his hand, and in the loud voice of a great schoolboy who tries to repress the emotion which swelled to tears, he cried—"Well, well, Montgomery, you will be the death of me at last. I cannot bear it —I cannot indeed—to know that your fame is blighted, your prospects gone.—I shall quit England; I shall go away where I can never behold you more. I will not see the end of this."

And he ceased speaking from being nearly suffocated by agitation.

The General grasped his hand affectionately, and replied; "Do you think that I suffer less? no, no; the silent grief which preys upon *me*, is of a far more desperate kind; lament and commiserate, but do not blame me." So saying, he walked away, and his friend suffered him to depart.

A few more days saw the invalids restored to health, and once more reunited; Lady Emily paler than usual indeed, and still more aërial, her light step somewhat measured and trembling, as she leaned on her uncle for support; but still there was an alacrity in the manner in which she moved to meet the extended hand of Lord Mow-

bray, whose eyes sparkled from under their long-fringed lids, whilst with an ill-subdued transport he pressed that hand to his lips and to his heart, but could not utter a word.

Lady Emily was the first to say, "Thank God!" and through the soft tears she did not attempt to restrain, she smiled delightedly, as she inquired how he felt, and when he should be able to use his arm, which at present was suspended in a sling.

"*How* I feel? My dear Lady Emily, I trust my friends the General and Colonel Pennington can answer *how* I feel; though all I feel," he whispered in her ear, "no one perhaps can know;" and then he changed colour, fearing lest he had said too much; for though he sought for, and found encouragement in Lady Emily's gentle expression of solicitude, and that it was impossible he should mistake the favourable nature of the answer which he read in her timid, tender glance, he ascribed (so ingenious is the nature of love in tormenting itself) these favourable symptoms to gratitude alone.

The conversation soon became more general, and relieved him from the embarrassment which

otherwise would have become painful in the extreme. The party reverted to the transactions of the late eventful night, and Colonel Pennington expressed his hope that Lord Mowbray would never rest satisfied till he discovered the perpetrators of the deed.

"One thing I implore," cried Lady Emily. "It is, that none of you will endanger your own safety in such discovery:" and her eyes unconsciously rested upon Lord Mowbray with the tenderest look of concern.

"No, no, my Emily," said General Montgomery, "I do not think bravery ought to be thrown away upon such enemies, and I am sure Lord Mowbray is of my opinion; do not terrify yourself, or raise up unnecessary evils; it is not like you to do so."

"Humph!" said Colonel Pennington; "I have no notion of letting rascals in any shape escape that ought to be hanged; and wherever I find them—" (here he muttered sundry oaths and threats, which, in compliment to the presence of Lady Emily, were not *quite* audible.)

In the course of the morning it was proposed

that the invalids should have a drive, and an open carriage was ordered for that purpose. Already had Lady Emily taken her place, and Lord Mowbray was standing on the step of the barouche, waiting for General Montgomery and Colonel Pennington; but the latter was nowhere to be found. He was gone (one of the servants said) on a fishing excursion to some trout-streams up the country. And the General, at the same time, came forward with a bundle of papers in his hands, apparently in considerable agitation, but it was evidently a pleased agitation.

"It is impossible I should accompany you in your drive," he said; "only look at the packet which I have to read and reply to before post-time; but this shall not deprive you of the benefit of your intended excursion: I think, my dear Lord, I cannot fear to entrust my treasure to your care, after the gallant manner in which you have defended it; and I hope you will mutually derive health and strength from this balmy air. So pray do not remain at home on my account; perhaps by the time you return, my business may be happily over."

There was an expression in the General's words and manner which filled Lady Emily's heart with a confused idea of felicity.

"You have good news, I hope, from Frances," she said. A cloud came over the sunshine of his countenance, as he answered—"There are no letters from her."

"Can I not be of use to you, dearest uncle, by remaining at home?" asked Lady Emily; and she motioned to get out of the carriage. (Lord Mowbray felt for a moment that she *was too good.*) "Perhaps I can transcribe or write for you?"

"No, no, dearest and best, go, and inhale this delicious air; there is a renovation of existence in every breeze: and do you get into the carriage, my dear Lord, and take care of her; do not let her forget to put on her shawl, should the evening change on your return."

With what alacrity did Lord Mowbray obey! And the General blessed them in his heart as they drove from the door.

It was remarked in former times by a celebrated author, that to drive rapidly through the air in a

carriage with a beautiful woman, was one of the most pleasurable things in the world. Independent, perhaps, of this high sanction for the observation, Lord Mowbray would have enjoyed the feeling in its most vivid sense; with this difference, that he preferred to drive leisurely, and *savourer à longs traits* the ineffable delight of being quietly seated by her who was the universe to him. To be thus situated with a beloved object, to feel a consciousness of being mutually dear, to entertain that mystery of the heart's intimacy which has never been spoken, yet is completely understood, leaves nothing to regret, nothing to wish for. It is the short-lived perfection of a bliss which owns no alloy of earth; it is a luminous point of existence as indescribable as it is brief.

Lady Emily was the first to break the delicious silence, which continued for a considerable time after they had entered the carriage, by remarking that some communication of an intensely interesting nature must have been conveyed in the letter General Montgomery had received, "for there was a radiant expression of happiness on

my uncle's countenance," she said, "which I have never seen even in his most joyous days, and this has filled my heart with gladness."

"Any thing that can add to your felicity," replied her companion, "will be most precious to mine; and, for the General's own sake also, I rejoice at the cause, whatever it may be."

They now drove along the high cliffs overlooking that part of the shore, from whence they could see, down among the rocks beneath, the very spot where Lord Mowbray had rescued Lady Emily.

"I shudder as I look at it," cried the latter, involuntarily leaning towards her protector, as if again seeking his support.

"And I too," he cried; "although there is rapture in the contrast of the thought with this delightful moment." And again they relapsed into silence.

In the progress of their drive they wound up the hill, and came in sight of the temple which Lord Mowbray had erected in honour of his first interview with Lady Emily.

"I thought," said she, "a very few days

ago, that I might perhaps never have beheld that beautiful building more; and I feel a double pleasure to be thus again permitted to admire it."

"Never see it more!" replied her companion; "how so, Lady Emily? what do you mean?"

Lady Emily by this time recollected that her speech might have disclosed what General Montgomery would not choose she should reveal, and she replied with some confusion, but at the same time endeavouring to laugh it off, "Oh! only that my uncle had decided on returning home immediately; and it is always so uncertain whether one ever comes back to any place or not—life itself is so uncertain, so precarious."

"Oh! do not remind me of that at present," he said; "I am not prepared to listen to you calmly, not good enough to bear it. Surely there may be moments when one may be pardoned for——"

"For forgetting that one is mortal?" said Lady Emily, with a smile.

"Precisely," he answered, with an emphasis and a look that threw her into a confusion, which, however pleasurable, she was glad enough to

escape from, by saying, "Well! since I am once more here, allow me to avail myself of the opportunity to behold again the beautiful fresco."

"I was in hope," he said, "that you would deign to rest yourself within the pavilion; for, after your illness, I dreaded that you might be fatigued, and I have ordered some refreshment to be prepared for you."

How many undefined sensations of pleasure glowed in her breast, when she found herself in this beautiful building! It was deserving the admiration of less partial judges than Lady Emily; and she was quite struck with a splendid effect of sunshine, which happened to light up the fresco at the moment they entered. While she gazed at the work, she could not but reflect, that he who had thus commemorated the incident that stood thus stamped, as it were, in undying beauty before her, must have felt an interest in it beyond that of a mere lover of the art; and she half repented having expressed so openly her anxiety to see it again, which threw a sudden constraint over her manner, that Lord Mowbray did not fail to observe, and, with the delicacy of true love, to misinterpret to his own disadvantage.

"Perhaps," he thought, "she repents of having given me a gleam of hope by her previous behaviour, or it may be she has changed her mind. At all events, I can bear this suspense no longer;" then with a sort of desperate courage, and in a voice rendered doubly persuasive by the tremulousness of its accent, he declared his love for her, and besought her to decide his fate.

Above all feigning, Lady Emily received his declaration as it merited, with an undisguised tenderness; and suffered him to read in her looks the tide of joy which inundated her heart, and which her soft language confirmed; but after the first inebriation of the moment had subsided, she added, with a changed expression, "But my uncle, my dear uncle."

"What of him? Will he then oppose our union?"

"Yes—no—that is to say, I fear——"

"Fear what, my Emily? what have you to fear from him? Surely he loves you too well to oppose your wishes on a point in which you have just now so sweetly confessed your own happiness is concerned?"

"My uncle would do every thing that he could,

I am sure, to forward, not impede, our wishes; —only I fear he may have scruples, on your account, in regard to——" and she hesitated.

"To what, my Emily? for you must let me *call* you mine—to what? on my account? what can you mean—what—what mystery do your words imply? do you mean, regard to my past life? if that is all, I hope to satisfy him that my errors are repented of—that they are past for ever."

Oh! I made no allusion to yourself when I spoke as I did; but, in fine, it is my uncle must speak to you; be assured, I have no secrets to hide; but—there is a ——, and my fears are proportioned to the interest I feel."

"What! can it be possible that you should only have held the cup of happiness to my lips to dash it thence for ever?"

"Do not, I beseech you, Lord Mowbray, try my feelings thus; it is more than I can well bear to contend at the same moment with my own anxiety and your suspicions. What motive could I have for such unworthy conduct? I have confessed my attachment to you in all its vividness, and I am ready to promise that none other shall supersede it in my heart; but my uncle is to me

as a parent; you would yourself justly condemn me, could I dispose of my hand without a reference to his authority, and he may have reasons for disapproving our marriage, which do not in any way attach to you; yet surely this possibility, to which I merely allude, ought not to affect you thus. At all events, is it not sufficient happiness in this earth, thus to love and be beloved?"

Lord Mowbray was all penitence for his impetuosity, promised her obedience in every thing, and rapturously kissed her hands.

"Nay," she said playfully, "that promise, you know, it may become *my* duty to make; for see," she added, pointing to the hat in the fresco, and recollecting her own words,—"you see *you have caught it at last.* But we must not forget that the hours fly too swiftly when they pass thus; let us return to the Castle."

"Nay, grant me one little moment longer, my own, own Emily. I feel as though I were going to lose you."

"You cannot, ought not to feel thus; I am your own, quite your own." And she passed swiftly by him, and stepped lightly into the car-

riage, in which he was reluctantly compelled to follow her.

The road back seemed but a mere span; so quickly, as it appeared to them, did they arrive at the Castle gate. It was, however, long past the usual dinner-hour, and the General was walking to and fro on the terrace, somewhat anxiously looking for the carriage.

"When I have been near losing a treasure," he said, as he gave her his arm to alight, "you cannot wonder, my Lord, that I should be terrified lest a second ill chance were to deprive me of it."

Lord Mowbray's thoughts and feelings being fixed on one subject, he directly fancied that this speech alluded in some way to him, and he construed it into something inimical to his wishes. He tormented himself unnecessarily; but Lady Emily, better read in her uncle's manner and expressions, saw only that sentiment of gladness and happiness confirmed, which she had observed when they had set out on their drive.

"Make haste to dress, dearest," cried the General; "do not keep us waiting any longer; there is Pennington, all impatience to see the produce

of his successful campaign smoking on the board. Remember, if poor Alpinia were here, she would say, 'A bonnie bride 's soon busked.'"

The proverb made Lady Emily blush and Lord Mowbray look "unutterable things;" while the General a little maliciously enjoyed the confusion of the parties, and observed, "Well, I think you must both have quarrelled this morning, for you look so strange and dismayed; but never mind, I believe we shall be able to arrange matters at some future period so as to settle your differences."

Lady Emily only replied by saying, in a cheerful voice, that she would hasten to obey his commands, and be soon ready for dinner; while Lord Mowbray, like a man in doubt as to the General's meaning, uttered something scarcely audible; and, making apologies for having detained him beyond the usual hour, passed on hastily to his toilette.

Each of the individuals who met during the repast, were conscious that something particular respecting them and their interest had occurred; but all seemed averse to entering on the subject which it was evident occupied their thoughts, and this consciousness threw a constraint over the con-

versation that seemed to baffle even Lady Emily's attempts to break the spell. When, however, the dinner was removed, General Montgomery said, in his wonted cheerfulness of manner, " My dear friends, I must beg your attention to a subject of deep and vital importance, and in which I know you will all take interest for my sake; but, though," he added with a smile, " ladies in general are excluded from councils of state, Emily, on the present occasion, must be admitted to the sitting; and as my communication will take up some time, may I request, Lord Mowbray, that we are not interrupted by the entrance of any one till you ring to admit them?"

The real interest felt by the parties to whom he addressed this speech, left no doubt on his mind of the eagerness with which they would attend to what he was about to communicate; and turning to Colonel Pennington, he said, " Now, my good friend, the time is happily arrived when I can explain to your satisfaction the mystery of the Mask."

" You might have done so long ago, if you had chosen; I know that well enough," exclaimed Colonel Pennington roughly.

Lady Emily started from her seat with surprise and pleasure, saying, "Now, thank Heaven! our woes are ended. I see, I know, that all is as it should be."

The General besought her to compose herself, and thus commenced his discourse.—"You recollect, Pennington, that when I retired into my study with the disguised stranger, we were alone?"

"Humph!" groaned the Colonel.

"And I do not deny that I held my hand on my pistols, with some idea that it might prove necessary to use them. The Mask, however, opened his business with a profession of friendly interest; and then added, that if I but wisely received the caution he was going to give me, I might still retain a good fortune, an unsullied name, and a high station in family descent; but if I contemned or rejected it, I should be hurled headlong to ruin and disgrace.

"You may suppose I denied the assertion that it was in any person's power to do this, and I answered in terms of haughty indignation to that effect; adding, that if he were come to extort money from me, which his manner and mode of communication naturally led me to suppose was

the case, he had much mistaken my character, and I commanded him peremptorily to depart immediately. 'Have a care, General,' said he, 'how you slight the offers I make to you—you are proud in your *own* integrity, and doubtless have a right to be so; no one hitherto ever questioned the *honour* of General Montgomery. You are proud too in the reflected glory of a long line of ancestry:—but know, Sir, that the integrity of those whom you suppose immaculate, is more than questionable; and that, in consequence, the roof under which you now are sheltered is not your own—neither is this domain yours—nor is the blood you have hitherto boasted of, legitimate—your mother was never married to your father.'"

Here Colonel Pennington started up from his chair, and looked in the General's face. He went on—

"At the unparalleled effrontery of this assertion, the big drops stood on my forehead. I was unable to speak, or to give utterance to the defiance with which I prepared to meet the calumny. He went on to say, 'It is natural that you, Sir, with all your honourable feelings, should be hard of belief to a circumstance so overwhelming, so

utterly humiliating; but my employers have not lightly taken up this business, or acted upon vague and uncertain data. They have irrefragable proof of your being born out of wedlock; the documents and papers are in their hands, which fully explain all the circumstances of your father's attachment to Miss Maclean, his parents' opposition to their union, and the subsequent misfortune of your untimely birth.' Here, I confess, my indignation burst forth, and I flung the falsehood in his teeth.

" 'It is well,' he said, 'it is even natural; and I can forgive you; but I am concerned to see that your feelings thus overcome your judgment. Again I request that you will hear me farther and patiently. I will then leave you to decide at leisure on the proposal which it remains for me to offer to your consideration, and for you to accept. Should the papers and documents, of which copies shall be sent you, prove conclusive to your maturer judgment, (and I cannot doubt that you will at once recognise their authenticity,) you will then, I conceive, not deem the proposal I now make, so utterly unworthy of your attention. A man of no mean birth, or fortune, or situation in

life, has been for some time secretly attached to your niece, Lady Emily; swear to induce this lady to give her hand to him, settle your estate on her at your death, and the whole affair shall be hushed into everlasting secrecy. You will save a mother's reputation, your own disgrace, and secure the happiness of your niece, while you save her from the misery of seeing your downfal, which, in some degree, you must be conscious will attach a stain on her.'

"'What!' I cried indignantly, 'barter my precious niece's hand as a bribe to maintain my own rights and character, thus slanderously and surreptitiously attacked! What, Sir, do you take me for? A pusillanimous, superannuated dotard? Away, Sir, I will hear no more; provoke me farther, and I will call my servants to tear that disguise from off you, under which you have sheltered the baseness of your purpose, and have dared thus to pollute my ears and insult my understanding. Away, Sir, or the protection of my roof shall no longer be your security.'

"The Mask spoke not; but, putting his hand into his breast, advanced towards me. I had mine on my pistol; I thought the moment was come for

using it, and I felt rather ashamed when I saw him draw forth a letter, which he held before me. 'This letter I must not let out of my hands,' said he; 'but you may read it, and mark it well.' The characters I knew to be those of my dearest mother. I gazed in stupid astonishment for a moment; then, rallying my senses, I read the words traced on that fatal paper. The letter was addressed to my father, full of tenderness; such a letter as she alone knew how to write; the character, the style were hers: but the information it contained, how heart-rending! how impossible to credit that it should be genuine! It was addressed to my father; and after lamenting the opposition of his parents to their union, and expressing her misery on that subject, it announced, in a postscript, the birth of a son. I read it rapidly; but the contents were too deeply engraven on my mind for me ever to forget them. A remembrance of a thousand mysterious circumstances, the constant estrangement of my father's family from himself and my mother,—all rushed upon my mind, and the belief of the truth of this dark story flashed with dreadful conviction on me. I stood like one who had received his death-blow.

"'Are you satisfied?' asked my tormentor; and, ere I could reply, he rushed from the room and out of the house, shutting the doors with violence as he passed."

"What! and you did not fire, then?"

"No, Pennington, thank God I did not! The report of the pistol was only the effect of your imagination. The villain fled, but he left a dagger in my heart. The state of mind in which this communication had plunged me was such, that nothing could disguise the inward agony of my soul. To attempt to describe it is vain: suffice it to say, that the change you all remarked in me was the effect of this dreadful interview. Every thing I had loved, my possessions, my dependants, became all to me a cruel mockery; nay, even my dearest Emily was a source of bitter pain and self-reproach. To seem the thing I was not, a sort of phantom, a tinsel puppet of honours and dignities which did not, in fact, belong to me—Oh! intolerable weight of woe! better be the commonest hind that breaks the clods in the field, than wear the garb of spurious greatness.

"For a time, I almost forgot to look for aid where only it can be found; but I was mercifully

reminded that we are never forsaken if we put our trust where alone it can be placed with perfect security; and then came over me that indescribable calm which is the portion of sufferers who know no pangs of self-reproach.

" I now coolly reflected on what I ought to do, situated as I was. I even made it a question whether I should not openly declare my supposed illegitimacy; but then the idea of exposing the errors of beloved parents withheld me, and a lingering hope remained that I might still be able to prove the marriage. The letter might have been a forgery. Forgeries have been known to have deceived the very persons whose handwriting they imitated. I determined, therefore, after many fluctuating thoughts, to put every thing in such order at the Hall, as would enable me to leave it at a moment's warning, without ever returning to behold it again; and to settle my affairs with so much precision, as might afford to the next owner an exact account of all my expenditure in and about the house and place; its improved state from that in which I received it; and my conscientious use of the timber, &c.; so that no arrears could be claimed in the event of

my being dispossessed. I then went to town, and there my indefatigable researches to obtain the necessary documents of my birthright proved of no avail. In every face methought I saw a secret foe; every morning I awoke expecting that the day would not pass without my being summoned to answer to the charge of unlawfully possessing an estate to which I had no right."

"Ah, my dear uncle," exclaimed Lady Emily, interrupting him, "what you must have suffered at that time, when I was thinking only of pleasure and amusement!"

"Frances's marriage," continued the General, "which, under any other circumstance, would have been so gratifying to me, now weighed me down with distress and confusion: I was a beggar, and had made my nieces partakers in my ruin. You may conceive my wretched state of humiliation, but I have no words to describe it. When, at length, all hope seemed utterly destroyed, I determined to suit my mode of life to my fortunes: I dismissed my servants, sought out an abode suitable to my change of condition, and to bend my mind to the circumstances in which I was placed. In this, my great extremity, I had one

blessing left me, which consoled me for the loss of all the rest. In you, my Emily, I found unchanging love, unwearying attention, and a serene cheerfulness, which lightened my darkest hours."

"Dearest uncle, talk not thus; you distress me. I did only what every other would have done, I trust, in my place. I should have been a wretch had I felt otherwise."

"Well, you all know what followed. I settled at the farm; and there, except that I received long threatening and anonymous letters, I lived in that peace which conscious rectitude affords; and still, as these letters were not followed by any open attack, I acquired a resignation and composure which restored, in great measure, my health. The full strength of the storm never broke upon me till Pennington detailed the terrible reports which were circulated; that I stood branded in the public opinion as a murderer. It was not enough that the blot of being an illegitimate usurper of wealth and situation should attach to me—to be whispered of, as of one who, though courted and followed for the advantages obtained by frequenting my house and sharing in

my luxuries, was nevertheless a fraudulent and short-lived possessor. I was also accused of murder! Now, then, did I feel called upon to decide my fate. I was either tamely to sit down, covered with infamy, or, by disclosing the whole story and publicly calling upon those who declared themselves capable of dispossessing me of my estates, to come forward and prove their claim—to load the memory of my parents with disgrace, and to exchange the infamy of a sinful birth, which was not my own fault, for the supposed guilt of a crime which would have attached to me alone.

" Before I finally decided which of these measures to pursue, I determined to await the return of a person from the place where I was born, who had been sent there by my agents, and whose arrival in England was hourly expected. I felt, however, that to remain an hour longer under Lord Mowbray's roof, or to subject him to the disgrace of having such an inmate, was not permissable, and I resolved to leave Mowbray Castle the very next day."

" I conjure you, my dear General," said Lord Mowbray, " not to distress me by such allusions.

My trust in you has never for an instant wavered; it never can waver; permit me to implore you——"

"I thank you, my dear Lord, with all gratitude. But hear me to the end. That same night, previous to my intended departure, the event occurred which might, but for your providential interference, have ended so fatally, and which, now that I connect the various discrepancies of this strange story together, I cannot help believing must have originated in, and have been an endeavour on the part of the same iniquitous person, whose slander and threats have embittered my existence, and indeed nearly deprived me of it altogether. The impression is on my mind, that the attempt to seize my niece was not made by smugglers, or with any view to plunder: but, be this as it may, the sequel of my story, which is now near its close, will prove to you that I have reason to be the happiest and most grateful of men."

Colonel Pennington arose, walked quickly to the General's chair, seized the back of it with one hand, while with the other he covered his face, and thus awaited the rest of his friend's communication.

"My messenger is returned from Turin, and I have this day received from my agents the register

of my mother's marriage, which took place in the English Ambassador's palace, together with that of my birth, which happened some fifteen months afterwards at Paris. Other letters and documents give a full detail of this event. My mother did unfortunately marry my father without consent of their parents; and from this imprudence has ensued all the misery their offspring has endured, and which might, but for the wonderful and providential preservation of these papers, have sent him down to a dishonoured grave. The particulars of this business I need not now enter into; its blessed conclusion suffices to restore me, and all those most dear to me, to happiness and honour."

Lady Emily threw herself into her uncle's arms. The Colonel left the room to hide his emotion. Lord Mowbray was not less intensely affected with a sense of happiness; and the broken words, the glances of affection, and the silent prayers which were mutually exchanged between the parties, and offered in silence by each to Heaven for this unexpected felicity, could alone convey any idea of their respective feelings.

Lord Mowbray took an early opportunity the next day to request a conversation with the

General, and he then, with all the timidity of a real passion, requested Lady Emily's hand. He avowed his having already disclosed his love to herself, and added, he believed he had reason to hope, that, should the General not oppose their union, Lady Emily was inclined to lend a favourable ear to his suit.

"My dear Lord, it were impossible for me to deny, if I wished it, any thing that my precious Emily conceives necessary to her happiness; but in the present instance, as in almost every other, from her birth up until now, that blessed creature's choice only confirms my own.—She is yours, my dear Lord, with all that the fondest and most parental love can add to bless your union. Yet stay, do not thank me yet; one proviso I must make. It shall never be said that General Montgomery gave his niece to Lord Mowbray while a shadow of reflected disgrace from her uncle could rest upon her."

"Oh my dear, my honoured General! do not, do not dash the full and brimming over cup of felicity with such vain and useless and cruel alloy."

"I know, my dear Lord, all you would say;

but in this respect I am inexorable. Go—go to Emily, consult with her; she will tell you, I am right. Soon, very soon, this dark surmise must be done away, and then not a shadow will remain to dim the brightness of our horizon."

Lord Mowbray acquiesced mournfully, for he saw that to press his suit would be of no avail, and he felt, too, that there was an indelicacy in so doing, from which he shrunk. With grateful and delighted acknowledgments he poured out his heart's feelings before General Montgomery, and then left him, to share with Lady Emily the joy with which his own bosom was overflowing.

She, with her usual gentleness and implicit obedience to her uncle's wishes, endeavoured to place all the reason of the General's resolve in its best point of view; and Lord Mowbray felt compelled to restrain his own rebellious impatience, and to rest contented with a promise of that future bliss, which he would fain have secured at a nearer and more certain moment.

Colonel Pennington, with all his wonted impetuosity, upbraided the General with a too

scrupulous refinement; but the resolve was not to be changed, and the General announced his immediate return to Montgomery Hall. As he wound up his intention with an affectionate invitation to Lord Mowbray to accompany them, and an assurance to the Colonel, that if he too was not of the party, he would never more consider him as his friend,—this resolution was not likely to be productive of any thing but general satisfaction; and it is seldom that four persons more united in taste and mind, more happy in outward circumstances, or more blessed in virtuous and honourable attachment, ever set forth with gayer hearts to travel together in the road of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

Elle étoit de ce monde ou les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin ;
Et Rose, elle a vecu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin.

MALHERBE.

WHAT words can paint the delight with which the General once more entered upon his domains! At the last stage before they reached Montgomery Hall, spite of his serene and heavenly temper, he could not help evincing the utmost impatience, owing to a delay in procuring horses, lest, as he confessed himself, he should not arrive in time to behold, while it was yet daylight, his dear loved woods, and it gratified him to observe an equal interest in Lady Emily.

When the carriage drove round the last turning that led into the gates of the park, for a moment

his feelings overcame him; and a few tears, in spite of all his efforts to restrain his emotion, rolled over his cheeks. Here he was welcomed by a troop of villagers, who flocked around his carriage, and rent the air with their acclamations—not the popular acclamations of a rabble, fired by momentary impulse into an enthusiasm for which they could give no reason, but the heartfelt proofs of an undoubted attachment which had existed for many generations towards the family of Montgomery, and which, handed down from father to son, the result of mutual services between the lord and his dependants, was carefully maintained by both in the habitual fulfilment of their several duties.

"I am afraid," said the General, addressing Lord Mowbray, "all this must be rather tiresome to you, my dear Lord."

"It is doing me an injustice, I assure you, General, to suppose so," replied Lord Mowbray; "every thing which gives you pleasure is interesting to me besides."

"Humph!" interrupted the Colonel. "It must be a vitiated mind, indeed, which can deem such suffrage tiresome. In truth, I do not believe, that there exists that man to whom it could be indif-

ferent; but there are too many, unfortunately, who forget, or disdain to use, the means by which these gratifying testimonies are preserved and cherished; for though they violate all the ties which would preserve their rights in the hearts of their tenantry, they feel mortified and angry when they cease to receive such proofs of their attachment, as can alone be preserved by an unvarying interchange of good offices, and the influence of long residence and constant presence. When these means are neglected by the possessor of a great domain, he can have no right to expect the reward due only to an opposite mode of conduct. This is not your case, General; and hitherto, my Lord, it has not been yours; so that I may preach without fearing to displease."

"Ay, and you have preached well too, my good Pennington," said the General.

The latter, even during his forced absence, had thought of and consulted the welfare of all those connected with his estates. He had given constant proofs of a lively interest in their welfare, and even at distance and in absence had preserved their devoted attachment to him and to his family; the rapture with which they now greeted his return amongst them, was therefore genuine and vivid.

To leave no part of this happy picture untouched by the sunshine of joy, all the place had been kept up in its highest perfection. The old trees and young plantations were thriving and vigorous, and seemed to wave their foliage in welcome and in gladness. Even the good old Sir Richard Townley had wisely kept his snug corner by the fireside in the oak parlour, together with the superannuated hounds, Sprightly and Baymoon, though still they were not so superannuated as to have forgotten their lord; they did their very best to testify their joyous recognition of him, and even their fidelity was a balm to the good General's heart.

"How goes it, Sir Richard?" he cried, when the latter first came to meet him; "I should not have known the Hall again, had I not found you here. I hope you have taken care of yourself during my long absence," he added, kindly laying his hand on his shoulder, and appearing to require its aid as he walked into the house.—"Ah! and my dear old hounds too, the last of that fine pack, still as fat and as sleek as ever!"

"Dear creatures!" cried Lady Emily, coaxing them; "and my canaries, and the old grey parrot?"

"All vastly well, I am happy to say," answered Sir Richard, only longing to see their beautiful mistress again. But I have taken the greatest care of them, I do assure your Ladyship; covered them up on the winter nights, and saw them all tended and cleaned every day. I would not have neglected any thing Lady Emily had a regard for—no, not for all the world. And, General, allow me to assure you, you will not find one thistle about the premises; to-morrow, when you take your rounds, you will see what use I have been of, not a root left any where; I have worked—you do not know how hard I have worked."

"My worthy Knight," cried the General, "I am truly indebted to you; but I shall not wait till to-morrow; it is a fine evening, and I must go just as far as my favourite terrace.—Do have the goodness to fetch me my hat."

While Sir Richard went in quest of it, the General said—"Who could despise the innocent boastings of that kind-hearted man? let the proud philosopher, or the fastidious critic, contemn or disdain his society: I avow that I would not exchange it for theirs; there is often more comfort, more genuine friendship, to be met with from such

a humble unpretending friend, than from those whose attainments and professions are placed on a higher standard—ay, and more to be learned too in the greatest school of all—that of truth and simplicity."

While the General and Sir Richard walked on before, Lady Emily enjoyed the delight of leaning on Lord Mowbray's arm, hearing him recapitulate all his thoughts and feelings during his first residence there. The past was brought forward to add its stores of felicity to the present moment; and as she every now and then bounded from him to look at some favourite plant which she had tended with her own hands, he felt all the charm of a character, whose purity and freshness had never been sullied by a factitious life, or deadened to innocent pleasures. The fineness of the evening, the perfume of the dewy flowers, the transparency of the æther, and the pale light of the stars as they at first came twinkling forth, but, growing brighter and brighter as the night drew on, covered the heavens with their glory,—were all objects which united to inspire them with sensations of happiness that owned a touch of more than earthly felicity.

The next day, Lady Emily was awake at an

early hour: her slumber had been of that profound kind, that she arose, as it were, to a new existence. But quickly all the circumstances of her own identity returned, and she remembered with pious gratitude, that she was a happy favoured being. In her recollections, however, a thought of the lost Rose, the humble companion of her girlish sports, saddened her heart, and she determined on paying the only tribute she could to that remembrance, by going immediately to see old Maud Delvin. Though she had often heard of her, a month or more had now elapsed since she had had any tidings, and she blamed herself as though she had been guilty of unkindness; many a regret, many an aching throb swelled her heart, as she thought of the days when she trod that path to meet her pretty innocent attendant. Now—she dared not even send a kindly sigh towards her, degraded as she was to the lowest stage of infamy.

Lady Emily had purposely gone alone, that the feelings of the unhappy mother might not be wounded by the presence of strangers, or of any one less feelingly alive to their situation than herself. When she arrived at the foot of the hill

on which the cottage stood, she heard a confused sound of many voices, and when she reached the garden wicket, she could scarcely believe that what she beheld was real. Many of the fruit-trees which grew in the little orchard adjoining the garden were cut down, and lay prostrate and mutilated; under those which remained still untouched, benches were placed, and a blue board with gold letters announced that the once rural orchard was turned into a tea-drinking, or rather beer-drinking garden. The garden itself was entirely dismantled; the little flower-beds were converted into a gravel-road; and the honeysuckle porch before the door had made way for a large staring sign of the Carlton arms, swinging and creaking to and fro upon a blue post. The white musk-rose, Delvin's pride, that had covered the whole house, and flaunted over the thatched roof, which had been planted when his child was born, to grow, as he fondly imagined, the emblem of herself, was now torn down and trodden under foot by the workmen and painters who were daubing the walls with a bright brick colour.

"What can all this mean?" said Emily, ad-

dressing one of the men; "by whose authority is all this devastation carrying on? Where are the Delvins?"

"They are in the workhouse, an' please your Ladyship; at least Maud be there, I believe, if she isn't dead."

"Dead! or, if living, in the workhouse!" exclaimed Lady Emily, horror-stricken; "who sent her there? how came I not to be informed of this? who has turned them out of their dwelling?"

"Oh! as to the matter of that, my Lady, really I cannot tell; your Ladyship knows some folks said you were never coming back to these parts; and as to the Delvins being turned out, there be many a way, you know, my Lady, of turning folks out of their dwellings, and making it seem as if it had been their own faults, when it was no such thing; but the Squire is a man of power, in comparison to they poor folks, and he has got the house in his own hands;—however, there be those who say, might overcomes right; so he has gived the house to one they call Black Giles, him as now keeps the Magpie out on the common."

"But," said Lady Emily, "I do not understand

by what right such a barbarous thing could be done?"

"It seems," replied the workman, "as how the Squire proved in law, that Delvin's lease was out a year ago, and that he was only a tenant at will, I think they call it; and so as he had given 'em notice to quit, he had a right to turn 'em out."

"Horrible!" said Lady Emily: "but how came it that the Delvins did not apply to my uncle and to me? How has this dreadful transaction been kept a secret from us?"

"I 'm sure I don't know; but" (scratching his head) "mayhap your Ladyship did not hear that Ould Delvin heard some news of his daughter in *Lunnun*, and set out one night *suddently;* and poor Maud was taken very bad at the time, and fell in a fit of some sort or other, so that they thought she'd have died outright. She was lying speechless when they comed to turn her out of her house; so she couldn't say nothing *against* it, poor soul, not she; and she is now lying in a sort of senseless state, if she been't gone dead; at any rate, she is not expected to live."

Not one word could Lady Emily utter, but

she sunk down on one of the felled trees. She leaned her head on her hand and listened for some time with a sort of horror to the discordant noises that so rudely invaded that once tranquil and rural spot, instead of the singing of birds and the humming of bees that she had been wont to listen to there. The workmen without, continued to toss the timber about and felled the luxurious boughs with merciless strokes; while the hammering within went on briskly, and the coarse language of the men seemed to her ears like the jargon of evil spirits rejoicing in the devastation they made.

Lady Emily continued to sit on, unable to move away, as though she were spell-bound. She saw the last drive of the pick-axe tear up the long twisting roots of the white clustering rose-tree; she saw its flowers soiled, trodden upon, and trailed on the ground. She thought of its name-sake, of the worthy couple who had planted and cherished it, and then for the first time the tears gushed from her eyes.

After this natural burst of feeling she composed herself in some degree, and was enabled to

follow the man whom she had procured to show her the way to the workhouse. At the end of the village, down a very narrow and dirty lane, stood this abode of wretchedness. Lady Emily was obliged to stoop as she descended a few broken steps into a low close room, where the first object she beheld was poor Maud sitting listlessly on the side of a miserable mattress which served her for a bed. Three other old women were likewise in the room. One of them was ill; the other two, the very picture of squalid poverty and idleness, were loitering about as if they hoped for, and expected nothing better than the state from which they had ceased to make any efforts to extricate themselves. The room and its inhabitants presented altogether a scene of suffering hitherto unknown to Lady Emily. The walls, which had been whitewashed, were discoloured with various stains. Ill-spelled names were scrawled over them in various directions, the vapid resources of ignorance and idleness and ennui, like the scourge of the great and little vulgar; and a pewter mug and broken cup stood on a table, whence issued a potent smell of gin. A checked apron stuffed

into a broken pane, excluded the only breath of air which could have rendered the effluvia less baneful.

But Lady Emily's attention was entirely directed to Mrr. Delvin. The mattress on which the poor woman sat, was only supported from the damp mud floor by one bit of wood, the rest of the bedstead being completely broken. Her grey locks hung from beneath a dirty torn cap, and gave her an appearance of neglect and untidiness, the very reverse of her former self. She brushed her hair from off her eyes with her two hands, when Lady Emily entered; but having gazed at the latter for some time, she burst into laughter, and resumed her expression of utter unconsciousness.

"Maud, I am come to see you; do you not know me? it is I, Emily Lorimer, from Montgomery Hall."

Maud did not reply; but taking a long crooked yellow pin out of her clothes, she passed it between her fingers several times, saying, "There, it is quite straight again now," and then began to roll up the ragged coverlid of her bed, and made signs to Lady Emily to approach.

"Take it," she said, whispering—"take it to Rose—poor foolish thing, she may be dying of cold, you know, by this time:" and then again she laughed—that frenzied laugh which makes the blood run cold to hear.

"How long," said Lady Emily, after a considerable pause—"how long is it since Maud has been in this terrible state, and when did she come to this horrible place?"

"Your Ladyship is quite right," said a shabby-genteel old woman, with the remains of a red wig, and a dirty gause cap pinned on it; "it is a horrible place, as I know well enough that have been here these ten years; and as to Maud, she's as bad as may be, poor creature; but she's not worse off than her betters. She has been in the same state as now you see her, for this last fortnight. I say, Betty," (roaring in the ear of her deaf companion,) "it's about a month, an't it, since they tossed her down on that there bed; and for this last fortnight she has never moved off it."

"What do you say?" asked Betty.

"Oh, never mind!" interrupted Lady Emily; "it is enough."

"Ay, it be a fine day," said the deaf one, talking on; "an' if the sun shines in here, he shines every where, and that's sure."

"How plaguy deaf she is, my Lady! you may as well talk to a post. But I say it is about a month since old Maud was brought in here, and out again, it's my belief, she'll never go but as a corpse: but lauk-a-daisie, my Lady, your Ladyship need not take on so, though you're a kind lady. But there are many poor folks more to be pitied than she, who have lived in very different state, and yet com'd to worse than Maud Delvin; only she was always proud-like, as a body may say, and so vain of that slut of a daughter of hers! Pride goes before a fall, they say. Why we poor old folks have lived here these ten, ay these fifteen years, and we are not dead yet, though we have never had a fine lady or any living soul to give us a bit of any thing comforting; no, not so much as a drop of gin, or a dish of tea."

The garrulity of the complainant did not obtain for her the commiseration it was intended to excite; but after Lady Emily had settled with the overseer of this ill-regulated and abused charity whatever could tend to the present comfort or re-

lief of Maud; and having remained a sufficient time to assure herself that the miserable woman's affliction rendered her wholly insensible to any consolation she might have derived from her presence, she returned slowly and mournfully to the Hall.

On the road there, she had to pass the little brook, where the broken bridge was still in its mutilated state, and the willow-trees lay stripped of their bark, and bleaching in the sun. She sat down on the bank to recover from the shock she had received, and to compose her spirits before she met her uncle, in order not to damp his happiness; yet, in doing this, how many sad events crowded upon her recollection since the day of her morning excursion with Rose Delvin, and threw a cloud over the present brightness of her destiny! She remembered all poor Andrew's words about the ominous foreshowing which was to be observed in the ruin of the bridge; and she could not help thinking that there is frequently a shadowing type of things to come, in the casualties of every day's occurrence, which the eye of experience reads with some power of prophetic vision. Who can despise the words of the aged and the poor? These persons, from a course of trials, (if they are not

vicious persons,) are by necessity more spiritual than those who, in the pride of life and youth and fortune, look not beyond the opaque and sensible objects which surround them. Pleasure and pride extinguish the most exalted ardours of our nature. Let any soul retire within itself, and think of the moment when it conceives itself to have been purest —happiest:—they will not say, if they speak sincerely, that those moments were moments of the greatest worldly success—but the reverse. The self-humiliation of human vanity is its greatest glory.

Reflections of this nature found entrance even in the young mind of Emily. An hour's affliction will frequently convey an age of experience, if duly entertained; and Lady Emily had had many hours of affliction. But from this reverie she was startled by an approaching footstep. She looked up, and beheld Lord Mowbray.

At his approach, all sorrow fled, and the consciousness of present happiness banished every pain. Still the traces of regret were visible to his searching eyes; and he anxiously requested her to tell him what had occurred to affect her.

All that she related only served to unfold more charms in her character, and render her more and more dear to him. It were presumptuous to attempt to describe the mysterious enchantment which these happy lovers felt, as they walked slowly back and gazed on their former haunts. The rivulet, the flowery mead, and the golden-stemmed willows bending over the stream, were all mementos of the spring-time of their loves; and in each, some precious fancy dwelt, that none other could share, and few, perhaps, have ever conceived—for how few love as they did!

In the course of that day, an unexpected visitor arrived, no less a person than Corrie Lovel himself. He humbly but earnestly craved an immediate interview with the General, which was readily granted, and Lady Emily, and Lord Mowbray too, joyfully welcomed the old man; but when the first salutations were over, Corrie Lovel appeared restless, and evidently occupied with some anxious thought. After considerable awkwardness, he confessed that he wished to speak to the General *alone*.

"What, a secret! my friend Corrie. I am tired of secrets. However, I cannot refuse you

any thing. Come into the house, and you shall be heard."

Corrie followed General Montgomery in silence; and when the latter was seated, stood up before him, and laying his hand on his breast, said, "I have an ugly business to speak to you about, General, but my conscience would not let me rest till I confessed my crime to you. You have saved my life once, and you will not deprive me of it. I have murdered a man! yes, General, do not start, and look at me so angry-like, I have done this deed;—but it was to save you from some threatened danger."

"To save me, Corrie! I am shocked, indeed, that you should make my name a covering for such a crime."

"Honoured General, restrain your anger, I implore you, till you have heard my story. It is about a year ago, that, being overtaken by one of the biggest storms I was ever out in, I turned into the Magpie public-house, on Love-lane Common, for shelter; and having taken a pipe and a pot of beer, I fell into a sound sleep, from which I was awakened by the noise of some men's voices, who seemed disputing together angrily. They were in a

small parlour next to the tap, and did not think that the partition was so thin, I suppose, for I could hear what they said whenever they spoke out.

"'The old fellow is staunch,' said one of them; 'game to the backbone; nevertheless, the letter did his business, or I am much mistaken; and now it only remains that you get the necessary papers ready, and follow up the affair briskly.' 'You may depend on my doing so,' answered the other; 'but remember, Sir, my honour 's at stake; and though a job 's a job, I may make a bad job of it, if I don't take care. It is a matter, Sir, which requires great caution. I am the friend and legal adviser of both parties; and all I do is done, I am sure, out of good-will, and with a true spirit of friendship to both. But, nevertheless, this is a ticklish business, which will require much management, and is expensive, Sir, in the outset.' They then lowered their voices; and soon after that, I distinguished your name, General, pronounced in a threatening angry tone, upon which I set to, to listen with all my ears. All that was said, exactly, I cannot tell; but this I heard distinctly uttered by him who spoke first: 'Well, well, I care not—the girl I will

have; and somehow or other the old man must be brought to terms, or got rid of altogether.'"

"A most extraordinary story," interrupted the General; "it may lead to a discovery of—but go on, go on, Lovel!"

"At length both the men ceased talking; and then I heard the chinking of money, and a counting, like, of it down upon a table. After this, they made some observation about the storm having blown over, and went out at the front-door, having settled their score with the bar-maid, a young girl about twelve years old; the only person who chanced to be in the way. As soon as I marked which way they went, I inquired of her if she knew who they were; but she said she was a stranger, and had only come within a few days to her place, and had never set eyes on 'em afore. So, seeing I could get nothing out of her, I took my stick in my hand, and followed 'em as fast as possible, determined to discover their name and abode, and let your honour know you had an enemy, that you might be upon the look-out. I soon com'd up with 'em, but they were both so muffled up like, besides that the night was dark, and what light there was only flashed out by fits

and starts, when the moon popped from behind a cloud, that I could not tell what sort of chaps they were, excepting that one was short, t'other tall; and then all I could do was to keep 'em in sight till they came to the cross-roads, where one went on, and the other turned off to the right; so I could only watch one of them. I chose him who I thought looked to be the master; and I contrived, by keeping alongside, and under the shade of the hedges, to go a good distance unperceived.

"At last, however, he spied that there was some one dogging him, and he seemed by his way of walking, every now and then fast and slow by turns, to be hesitating what to do; when he suddenly stopped short, and facing sharp round upon me, drew a pistol and threatened me with instant death if I did not turn back the way I came. At the same moment the moon shone out, and I could see my man plain enough, so as to know him again any where, if he had not had on a mask——"

"A mask!" ejaculated General Montgomery, in much agitation, "how wonderful!"

"What! does your honour know any thing of him, then?"

"Proceed, Corrie, proceed; keep me not in suspense."

"Well, General, I had seen shots enow, not to be frightened at the sight of fire-arms; and I did not think the fellow would dare to murder me merely because I walked the same way he did, and so I told him. With that he gave me abusive language, and called me a gipsy scoundrel, and many hard words that I would not take from him nor no man; so I giv'd him a Rowland for his Oliver, and answered him back. Corrie Lovel was not behind-hand at that game—and he to it again, till my blood was up, and I told him I had overheard his wicked intentions respecting you, General, and pretended to know more nor I did know.—'Is it so, my hearty! then take that, to make you listen better another time,' and so saying, he levelled his pistol and fired. But I leapt aside, and the ball whizz'd past me untouched; with that, I sprung upon him, and we had a severe tussle, for he was a strong man, and I was nearly overcome. A moment I gasped for breath —I saw him fumbling for something at his girdle —I guessed what it was; and in an instant, while my hand was disengaged, I raised my trusty

bludgeon, and felled him with a blow, from which he dropped never to rise again. I waited not, as you may believe, to know more, but fled as fast as my legs could carry me; and thinking no danger could betide you, honoured General, from that quarter, I consulted my own safety alone; but, somehow, I have been a miserable man ever since; always expecting to be taken up, and hoping little from a true relation of the facts, as there were no witnesses to the transaction, and my word would go for nothing; for who would believe Corrie Lovel the gipsy?

"After a time, I came skulking back, in hopes of seeing you, honoured General. I thought as how I should be easier in mind if I could converse with you, and tell you my story; but you had left the Hall, and I could not learn where you were gone; and then, indeed, I was a very wretched man, for I had not a friend to look to in the world, and I felt as if every man's hand was against me. The instant I heard of your return, I came here with speed, and have now eased my mind of a heavy load."

"Your story, for many reasons, Corrie, is one which fills me with astonishment. I cannot disbe-

lieve your words,—why should I?—and they at once explain and confirm a circumstance which happened to myself, that renders it, indeed, one of the utmost interest and consequence to me. As you relate the story, you stand exonerated from the foul crime of which you accuse yourself; since, certainly, if your words are true, you only defended your own life."

"Honoured General, have you ever found me out in a lie?"

"I never have, Corrie; neither do I believe I have cause to distrust you on the present occasion. Nevertheless, it might, as you say, go hard with you, were you tried by the law for this offence; but the whole business is involved in mystery, and appears to me to be connected with another event of more recent date. I should advise you, therefore, to keep out of sight at present. Time brings foul and fair to light, and I do not despair yet of rendering you another service, and making it clearly appear, from corroborative evidence, that your story is strictly true."

"You do not then, honoured General, charge me with murder?" said Corrie Lovel, his eyes sparkling with satisfaction.

"Certainly not, Corrie; I repeat, you only defended your own life."

"Well, General, you saved that life once before, and now you have, as a body may say, saved it a second time; Heaven bless you and prosper you, and all belonging to you! and so Corrie humbly takes his leave."

It was some time before General Montgomery could recover from the surprise into which this extraordinary account had thrown him. Here, then, was a providential discovery which developed the machination that had been formed against him; and though he did not positively know *by whom*, his suspicions glanced at a quarter to which he could easily direct his inquiries. As his honour depended on the investigation of the affair, he determined on leaving no means unresorted to, that might detect the guilty. In doing this, however, he owed it to Corrie Lovel's safety to be cautious of exposing him to unjust suspicion.

After mature deliberation, General Montgomery decided, in consideration of his loved niece's happiness, to impart this astonishing narrative to Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington, under a

promise of the strictest confidence. He felt he owed it to Lady Emily, to satisfy Lord Mowbray's mind concerning the rumour which had gone abroad respecting him. Accordingly he imparted to them the avowal that Corrie had made, and he added, addressing Lord Mowbray, "The power thus unexpectedly afforded me of clearing away the dark surmise that attached to me, is doubly precious, as it enables me to give you the hand of Emily, and no longer to postpone your union."

The joy of all parties was thus rendered complete; and the pious and reflecting mind of Lady Emily failed not to see the mighty hand who can conduct us through the most intricate paths, and bring light out of darkness.

Lord Mowbray wrote to his friend Mr. Altamont, to request him to officiate at his approaching wedding. Joyfully he obeyed the summons. To him, likewise, the late wonderful events were communicated, and they obtained all his warmest sympathies.

"But you must not," said he, "in the fulness of your happiness forget, that to allow such delinquents as those who acted in this business to pass

undiscovered, would be positively wrong: too much goodness becomes weakness."

"Neither do I intend it," said the General. "As soon as Emily's nuptials have taken place, I will vigorously pursue my inquiries."

"So be it, then," he replied; "and let us fix an early day, that these inquiries may not be delayed. I have always a good reason, you know, my Lord, for helping a friend to the fulfilment of his wishes, when I can do so with a perfect trust, that I am rendering him a lasting happiness."

Nothing now remained to cast a shade upon Lady Emily's prospects but the recollection of her sister, whose great indifference to and neglect of her uncle, for a length of time, had been severely felt by him and by herself. The little she had elicited from Lord Mowbray respecting her was very unsatisfactory at best; and as she saw the subject was one of great disquietude and pain to the General, she resolved to drop it altogether for the present; trusting that, after the marriage, a reconciliation and restoration to his favour might be brought about with Lady Frances through her means.

In the parish church, Lady Emily and Lord

Mowbray received the nuptial benediction, attended by the prayers and blessings of the poor, as well as by the great, of the neighbourhood. Their marriage was not solemnized with any luxurious display, but was hallowed by a serious and devout sense of the great responsibility and awful nature of the vows they took upon themselves, and rendered doubly impressive by its being performed within the sacred walls of a place of worship.

CHAPTER IX.

Domestic happiness! thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-ty'd love,
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.

COWPER.

IT may be remembered, that Lady Bellamont had plunged into a vortex from which it is scarcely possible to retreat, when once entered upon. The current of dissipation sets in too strongly to be resisted by those who give themselves up to its ensnaring power, till it has hurled them into its destructive abyss. There were moments when a letter from Lady Emily, a message from Ge-

neral Montgomery, or some natural feeling of her childish years, recalled a half wish to change, or at least check her course; but then, false shame —a distaste for tranquil enjoyments—a deadness to intellectual pleasures, increased by an indulgence in every worldly gratification, the pride of life, and the flush of beauty, blinded their victim; and as she unloosed the sails of pleasure, she gave these compunctious visitings to the winds, and rapidly pursued the course of destruction.

From the time of the last notices on Lord and Lady Bellamont's married career, his attentions to Lady Dashwood became more glaring. He, poor deluded husband, finding himself neglected, almost contemned, by her who ought to have been devoted to him, sought refuge from mortified pride and wounded affection in the contrast of that pretended and false devotion which he met with from another, till he fancied himself seriously attached to her.—Then it was, that occasionally Lady Bellamont on her part felt the mortification of being a forsaken wife; and though she cared not for her husband's love, she was sufficiently selfish to dislike its being bestowed upon another. At such moments, she would seek occasion to

quarrel; and those occasions are never wanting when there is the will. He would then retaliate upon her, and mutual reproach and recrimination ensued. By degrees this too ceased; and an open defiance of all appearance even of caring for each other, was the next step in their downward career. Lady Bellamont constantly invited Lady Dashwood to her house; and the latter as constantly summoned Mr. Carlton, Mr. Lepel, and all the et cetera, whom she knew constituted Lady Bellamont's list of male flirts. Whenever there was any scene of quarrelling, or parting, or jealousy, between Lord Bellamont and Lady Dashwood, Lady Bellamont would contrive to leave them alone together, and then boast to the men in her train that she never interfered upon such occasions, but always allowed the parties to have their romantic quarrels and reconciliations out quietly.

Notwithstanding this excess of fashionable ton, or, as some might call it, depravity, Lady Bellamont's wounded vanity did not pass unobserved by Mr. Carlton, who took the opportunity to enlarge upon her wrongs, and to hold up her husband as a man in every way quite unworthy of her; at the same time affecting to sigh, and to say Lord

Bellamont knew not the treasure he possessed—a woman at whose feet he ought always to be—who had done him but too much honour in marrying him—who might have commanded any match in the kingdom, had she only been seen properly before she was inveigled into a marriage with *such* a man as *Bellamont!* By these insidious speeches, and such as these, he turned the tide of her vanity entirely upon himself; then he gradually dropped somewhat of the levity with which he had hitherto treated the subject of attachments; and at length with consummate skill, led her to believe that he had entertained a violent passion for her before her marriage, (the hackneyed but too successful contrivance of the licentious and profligate,) though, in fact, he had never thought of her but as of a woman who might be worth flirting with, after another man had been fool enough to marry her. Then he went on to say, that despairing of gaining her affections, and conceiving her to be totally indifferent to him, he had endeavoured to lose the painful sense of his disappointment, by affecting to laugh at all love, and to plunge into gaiety of every kind.

When a married woman suffers a man to make

her such an avowal, without checking him on its outset, she is on the very brink of a precipice, from which nothing less than a miracle can save her. Had she one recollection left of the *duty* and dignity of a wife, to say nothing of the peculiar *delicacy* of a married woman, which ought to render her more alive to every possible contamination than a single one, since the honour of two beings is in *her* keeping—she would turn with scorn from such degrading confidence, and scoff at the impudent falsehood which, nine times out of ten, is as much a falsehood as it is an insult.

But this was not Lady Bellamont's case. Greedy of admiration, which she would obtain at any cost —bent on pleasure—impatient of control—desiring something, she scarcely knew what, of a greater degree of liberty—*ton*—*éclat*, than any one ever boasted of before; she had set out on this track, by imagining (because she saw the same path pursued by a few who arrogated to themselves, poor silly insignificants! the title of "The World," *par excellence!*) that to despise every thing, and every body who were not of this number—to hold in ridicule or contempt all moral and religious duties—to think that all happiness depended on liv-

ing in one succession of empty pleasures, was to become the perfection of human nature, and to obtain the summit of felicity.

In order to be admitted one of this select crew, many watchings and labours were requisite; but labours become light when they are labours of love, so that Lady Bellamont had brought herself into perfect training; and, among other accomplishments, she had learned to receive the confidences, false and true, of all the impertinent coxcombs who chose to try how far they might pollute her mind by relating all they knew and did not know of every other woman of any note in "The World," *their world*, thereby gradually insinuating that there was in fact no such thing as purity existing; it was all a matter of terms, not of reality; an agreement *de convention*; a thing to take for granted—but every body as they got out of leading-strings knew otherwise. This fatal poison of corruption pours its insidious bane into the heart; and when the heart is once polluted, what is there in the individual that remains unsullied, since from thence flow "the issues of life?"

Lady Bellamont had not intended to lay herself open to the lost condition she gradually sunk into:

the criminal who begins his vicious career by petty thefts, does not intend to commit murder, still less does he mean to be hanged; but the path of vice, once entered upon, is fearfully rapid! whether it be that of fashionable or low crime, its end is destruction.

Mr. Carlton found his victim more difficult of attainment than he had foreseen; because she had less feeling and more calculation than he gave her credit for; but at length he prevailed so far as to make her imagine herself in love with him. This great point once effected, how did he show forth his triumph? He paraded her every where, as his property; attended her at all public places; passed whole mornings in her drawing-room; was always at the side of her barouche in the Park. If the point of Lady Bellamont's feather was seen, it was enough for all Mr. Carlton's friends to say, "Oh! yes, Carlton is here. I saw Lady Bellamont." When the lists were made out for invitations, it was said, "No, no, do not ask him, for I cannot have Lady Bellamont; my table is full, or my house will not admit of greater numbers;" she was, in short, the *affiché* of Mr. Carlton; and, melancholy to say, she knew she was,

and had come to that pass that she liked it, and conceived it to be a sort of distinction to have an *adorateur declaré.*

This might have been sufficiently tonish for Lady Bellamont, but it was by no means so for Mr. Carlton. At length, he watched his opportunity; and having detained her, till an undue hour, at a fête champetre and ball given at a celebrated villa, under pretence of its being impossible to find her carriage in the crowd, and various other excuses, he then, with well-acted despair, declared that her reputation was infallibly gone; that being seen walking about with him, in the absence of all her friends, and at such an hour, left her nothing for it but to place herself at once and for ever under his protection.

For this, however, she was not prepared, and she still persisted in going home. His carriage, which had followed at due distance, *happened* to come up at this moment on his making a signal to his servants, and she had no other resource left but that of getting into it, and being escorted by him to her own house. Arrived there, Mr. Carlton alighted and handed her in to the door, when, to her astonishment, Lord Bellamont himself re-

ceived her. He was evidently flushed with wine; but not sufficiently inebriated to be ignorant of the manner and the hour of her appearance.

Few women are so abandoned as not to shrink before the steady gaze of an injured husband. Lady Bellamont began apologising and accounting for her being so late, in a flurried but apparently careless way; when Mr. Carlton whispered to her, "Don't you see he is dead drunk; how can you condescend to talk to him thus, when he is in such a state?"

"Madam," said Lord Bellamont, taking her hand somewhat roughly and pulling her towards him, "go up to your apartment and hide your disgrace. As to you, Sir, you are a villain and a coward. To-morrow I will answer any thing you may have to say to this observation:" and, pointing to the street, he closed the door violently in Carlton's face.

A dreadful scene ensued between the husband and wife. It is not to be wondered at that Lord Bellamont, under such provocation, lost something of his 'vantage ground by the intemperate language in which he at first reproached his guilty wife. But Lady Bellamont, on the contrary,

taking advantage of a virtue, to which, in fact, she had no right, (for she forgot that there is an adultery of the heart,) defied him to any proof of her actual guilt; while he well knew, that his conduct with Lady Dashwood must for ever preclude the possibility of his daring to breathe a word against herself.

"Whatever may be my faults," replied Lord Bellamont, who was by this time perfectly sober, "they are no excuse for your's; and if, in some few instances, the husband's crimes may be pleaded in extenuation of the wife's, you must be conscious, Frances, that, in your own, they never can. Had I a thought but for you and of you? Did I not wish to live for you alone? Did I not intreat you to pass the greatest part of your time in the quiet of a domestic circle, in scenes of tranquil retirement, where social duties and married happiness are best preserved, free from the taint of bad example and dangerous temptation? But you scorned—nay, positively refused, all these my offers. What can be argued of a woman who will not consent to pass any time alone with her husband?"

"Argued?" why they will argue that she had

a cross, ill-tempered man to deal with—an unreasonable, jealous man, who could not suffer her ever to speak to a soul but himself. The wife will be pitied, the husband laughed at; that is all."

"Frances, the time is past when these false, flippant, and infamous ways of reasoning can affect me. I know my own faults now, thank God; and, in knowing and acknowledging them, I am restored to what I ought to be, not only your husband, but master. Listen to me, Lady Bellamont—I command you to listen to me. I have been the dupe of my own follies, the fond and foolish puppet of your will; and I have been on the verge of making a total wreck of my own dignity and self-esteem, together with that of our mutual happiness. But I have awakened to a sense of what I owe myself and you; and I will, if it be not too late, snatch you from that perdition into which my weakness and your own vanity or worse, had nearly plunged you."

"Mercy on me, what a tirade!"

"Nay, hear me out, Madam! I am willing to overlook the past; I am willing to confess my own errors, and am determined to redress them;

but in return I will take upon me those rights which, as a husband, are mine, and will control your conduct in such wise as seems good to me; not with brutal harshness (you cannot, Frances, in your heart accuse me of any thing but too fond a love), but with that wholesome restraint with which it is the duty of every man to guide his wife, and which every one who resigns will repent the longest day he breathes. I offer you now the return of a heart which you only estranged from you by your own acts. I offer you honourable, lasting, and pure attachment, with all the durable happiness which flows from such an unpolluted source; but in return I will be repaid by obedience and duty; and oh! how ardently I wish to add, by love!"

Lady Bellamont was touched; but too proud, too unsubdued in spirit to like to answer; she kept taking off her ornaments and twisting them in her fingers. Lord Bellamont looked at her despairingly—"I trust I am not too late," he said; and then added, "I will leave you, Frances, to reflect on what I have said. To-morrow, I shall expect your answer, your final answer,:" and he left her to take council with her own heart;—

but, alas! that heart was polluted—hardened—lost!

"My answer," said Lady Bellamont to herself as he left the apartment, "is determined upon already. I will not live another hour under this roof. What! submit to be watched, tyrannized, commanded by a cross, ill-tempered husband, and one, too, who forsook me? No: I have a spirit above that; but then, what is the alternative?"—and she calculated, or rather miscalculated, in the bitterness of her evil and deceived mind, that *the world—her world* would extenuate all she did, in consideration of Lord Bellamont's violence and ill-temper; and then she thought, "I shall only be out of society for a little while; Mr. Carlton is heir presumptive to a title—has a large estate—there will be a divorce, and all that; and then, after a nine days' wonder, he will bring me back to take my place in *the world* again. Do not such things happen every day? it depends upon the power of the man—his rank, his fashion; all these are Mr. Carlton's, or will be."

Such was the conclusion of Lady Bellamont's false and vicious reasoning; and the next day she voluntarily threw herself into Mr. Carlton's arms.

Lord Bellamont challenged Mr. Carlton. They met; and the latter, having received his fire, declared he owed him no ill-will, and could not think of returning it, so he fired in the air: and the gay world called him a brave and honourable man. What could *he* do if the Lady would run away with him? The Morning Post, and other public prints, teemed with the *fracas* for some days, and then it was as much forgotten as though it had never happened. Forgotten!—where? and by whom? It is an awful question—too awful to be answered in these pages.

Not many weeks after Lady Bellamont left her husband, she began to repent of the step she had taken, and became exceedingly weary of her forced retirement. Thrown on her own resources for amusement, she soon found that passion without mutual esteem will not last; then came that disgust and *ennui* which is its invariable consequence; no holy bond of union linked her and her paramour in the same chain of interests and of honourable pursuit—guilt threw off the mask, and Mr. Carlton already ceased to play the part of a lover. Then what was left to her? she experienced what she once professed to know, that a cottage and

love were mawkish things. They *are* so for the hardened and the guilty, the luxurious, the extravagant, and the idle. She tried to brave the sting of conscience, and go forth, a branded thing, to drive in the public places. Here she had the mortification to see even Lady Dashwood pass her carriage, and pretend not to know her. For the first time in her life, Lady Bellamont felt humbled; but, alas! it was not yet the humility of a contrite spirit; it was the mortification of disappointed vanity.

In a short time longer, the usual process of similar crimes produced similar results, namely, mutual reproaches and mutual disgust; but at length Lady Bellamont's extravagance was so great that Mr. Carlton told her she might provide herself with another protector, for he could not afford to keep her any longer.

Writhing under mortification and lacerated self-love, Lady Bellamont was still unsubdued, still impenitent. The fatal gift of beauty, fatal when misused, was still left her for her bane: love of indulgence and luxury, and show, still prevailed. To be poor and penitent she laughed at, and scorned the idea of appealing to her relations to

assist her in this her hour of need and save her from farther degradation. But no: to shine and to dazzle was still her ruling passion; and she plunged deeper into the fatal abyss of ruin and disgrace, till abandoned, forsaken, and left on a bed of sickness, the hour of remorse and reflection came at last too late for this world's mercy or forgiveness; but never too late, it may be hoped, for that to which she was shortly to be summoned.

Some time after Lady Emily's marriage, General Montgomery became acquainted with the miserable conduct and fate of his wretched niece Lady Bellamont. He sent her every consolation that her unhappy situation could admit of; and through her uncle's tender goodness, and the kindness of Mrs. Altamont, her death was more exemplary than her life had been.

Come as it might, it was a heavy blow on General Montgomery, and long and deeply did Lady Mowbray also feel this sorrow.—"I should have been too happy," she said, as she wept in her husband's arms, "had not this calamity reminded me that perfect bliss is not the portion of this life."

The General, in compliance with Lady Bella-

mont's last wish, gave orders that her funeral should take place in the parish church of his domains, and her body was accordingly conveyed thither for interment.

There was one carriage that met the burial-procession as it was turning into the church-yard, and impeded the progress of the hearse. It was Mr. Carlton's. His attention was attracted by the numerous train of attendants, which marked the funeral to be that of some distinguished person. He inquired whose it was, and learned it was that of the unhappy Lady Bellamont. Struck with the awful coincidence of this meeting, and in a moment of conviction as it were of his own guilt, the very circumstance of his having crossed the progress of her body as it was borne to the grave, seemed to have appalled him; and shrinking from the sight, he said to his servants in an agitated voice, "Drive back,—back to the Manor-house!"

There he lingered; but never roused himself from the blow which had fallen upon him. Some interior convulsion had taken place, which he himself felt to be the harbinger of approaching death, and his thoughts were directed to that tribunal before which he was conscious he should soon ap-

pear. Fearful and appalling must have been the reflections and anticipations of a man whose life had been such as Mr. Carlton's. In one instance he did all which was left in his power, to make some poor amends for the error of his ways: he disburthened his conscience of the guilty conduct he had pursued towards General Montgomery; and some days before the attack of palsy, which carried him to his grave, had deprived him of the power of utterance and of his senses, he addressed the following letter to General Montgomery, at once explanatory of many mysterious circumstances which have occurred in the course of this narrative, and convicting himself of the basest and most refined villany.

Mr. Carlton's Letter to General Montgomery.

"But for the atonement I am anxious to offer by the honesty of this confession, I had spared myself the pain and humiliation which it will cause me; and but for a motive, the nature of which cannot be misunderstood, (my ardent and heartfelt desire to repair the evil I have done,)

had saved my memory by concealment, from the additional guilt of having forfeited your friendship, and basely repaid every kindness showered upon me, by a series of the most unprovoked, premeditated, and calm acts of ingratitude.

"A fearful mystery has for months past hung publicly over your character and conduct; doubts and suspicions of your birth-right and claim to the property which you had hitherto used and enjoyed as your own, have wrung your heart in secret; and, without the power of either repelling the falsehood of an insinuation made to you in private, and under a sacred obligation to silence, or of conscientiously restoring what you innocently had kept from another, your very possessions have become bitterness to you, and your family distinctions (in your own breast) a stigma and reproach. In solitude and retirement you have shunned the gaze of the world, and the society of those whom you once held dear as friends. You have borne the reproach of such as believed you guilty; you have seen the ardour of former friendships almost extinguished, while your silence, on subjects which you *dared* not reveal,

have confirmed their reluctant suspicions of your integrity. By a sense of honour, refined and noble beyond the general feelings of mankind, you had almost forfeited the happiness of a being, whose existence and affections were devoted to your declining years, and who, the captive of violence and fraud, had well nigh been snatched from your bosom, and, leaving you friendless, alone, and miserable, had herself been reduced to wretchedness and disgrace.

"Through whom has this accumulated suffering been visited upon you? By whose agency, and for *what* cause has this misfortune been suffered to impend over and destroy your peace? It has been through *me*—through my machination—for my purposes—through my villany—for my most wicked ends! Behold, in this voluntary confession of my crime and of my penitence, the only retribution which (lost and infamous in my own eyes, as I must be in yours, and approaching fast to that hour when I must render an account of all to my Maker) I can now render to *you:* and may, oh! may this step, in proportion as it disburthens my own conscience of its load

of guilt, restore tranquillity to a spirit which I have so wantonly and so wickedly wounded!

"But my strength forbids an indulgence of my own feelings at this crisis. I must be brief, or the points which render my writing imperative will go unexplained. I need not recall to your remembrance (for full well have I understood the fatal influence it exercised over you) the conversation held with *the stranger in the mask.* His proposals, and his threats to induce compliance with his demands, might well have authorised any measures, spite of the solemn engagement exacted from you of secrecy, which could have been taken to repel their offer; and could you have read, could you have penetrated the veil which hid their atrocity, you *had* done so, your indignation had been hurled publicly on the offender, and he had received at the moment his just reward; but a sense of honour forbade your disclosure of what had passed; the nature of the subject forbade it also; and it was this circumstance which afforded to your traducer his best security, and placed in his hands the means of more securely blasting your reputation, and in-

dulging more freely the spirit of revenge which actuated him. It is useless to persevere in the disguise which I assumed on that night. It was myself who came, concealed by the dress I wore, on that mysterious errand, which had for its object the gratification of restless ambition, and the resentment of a mortified vanity, whilst I knew I was inflicting on an innocent and friendly heart the deadliest wounds.

"Yes, it was I! I stand before *you*, General Montgomery, who *have* been, and had nearly been yet more my victim, the self-accused, self-condemned author of *all* the misery you have undergone. There is another who has been my agent—prompter—counsellor, in this base transaction; him I will denounce hereafter. But I write now of myself. A desire to unite the Montgomery property to my own, was the first impulse I received in the line of conduct I unhappily pursued towards yourself; a marriage with one or other of your nieces, was the most evident step to ensure the accomplishment of my wishes; and had success attended this measure, I had been less guilty, perhaps, than I now am: when the motive, however, is vicious, the result can seldom be pro-

pitious, and such was my case. I was rejected, and from concurrent circumstances, (which my conscience, in respect to Rose Delvin, told me was too just a punishment,) I became an outcast from your society, and the finger of scorn, I felt, was pointed at me, in the midst of my own possessions. Revenge then took possession of my heart, and I found in the crafty villain Aldget, a too ready promoter of all my plans. It was he who, from an acquaintance with the affairs of your family, first suggested the possibility of your birth being destitute of the usual proofs, and of the consequent forfeiture of your right to the Montgomery estates; and though the evidence offered me on the subject was any thing but such as would establish the assumption, yet, misled by his arguments, and blinded by my own evil passions, I rashly conceived it only necessary to alarm you on the point, to ensure my ultimate success in it.

"We met; I found you undismayed by the power I attempted to assume; I saw you quivering under, and keenly alive to the disgrace inflicted on your birth, and on the reputation of your parents; I beheld you struggling with the sense of honour, which your word, given to me of

secrecy, imposed on your just and natural feelings of indignation, and—for the instant I was appalled. Had I then possessed courage to avow my disgrace, I had found, I am certain, even *in you*, whom I was injuring, the most indulgent and noblest forgiveness; and such an act might have led me back to the path of integrity: but I had advanced too far—I was in the power of another, besides yourself, and one whom I dared not trust. I retreated hastily therefore from your presence, and sought the minister of evil who was awaiting the result of my attempt.

"Our appointment had been made at a lone inn by the road-side, not far distant from your house. Thither I hastened as quickly as I could regain my horse, and at the door of the inn, giving him in charge to a stranger who had been brought for that purpose, and who conducted him instantly to a remote part of the country, I met Aldget. We retired to the only private apartment the house afforded, and our conversation towards the close grew warm. We left the inn, and after having proceeded together a portion of the way, we separated. I soon perceived that I was followed, and apparently watched, by a per-

son who dogged my footsteps. His intentions, from his pertinaciously tracking the windings which I made in my path, were sufficiently apparent, and I became alarmed. I *stopped*—questioned him. My suspicions were confirmed, and a struggle ensued between us, in which I received a blow that felled me to the ground, and left me for a time senseless. When I recovered, my antagonist was gone; and my first impulse was to ascertain if my disguise had fallen off in the encounter. This had not been the case. The mask, which had been firmly secured, was still in its place; and I felt persuaded that whoever had assailed me, could have no suspicion as to my person; the probability was, he had imagined me killed by the blow, and had sought to escape punishment by flight.

"The idea of my security, however, for the moment was banished, by fear of detection from the conversation that had taken place between Aldget and myself, and which I considered must have been overheard, and led to my being followed. I sought an interview with my counsellor; and the story which ran through the village, and which your servants had repeated of the visit of

the Mask on the preceding evening, together with his sudden disappearance, suggested to us the horrible expedient of fixing the stain of *murder* on your character. The slander was whispered—was listened to—and at length, on your quitting the Hall, was very generally believed to have some foundation in truth. I was not content with this circumscribed revenge however—but propagated, by every means in my power, in every society, the same falsehood, exaggerated in proportion as distance from the spot, and the circumstances of my hearers, gave opportunity; and often have I received the fiend-like gratification of hearing from others the fact repeated back in my own ear, with additional aggravations attending it.

"Such feelings grew with their indulgence, till success at length blunted the relish springing from a mere undermining of character. I sought deeper vengeance still. I determined, by a deadlier blow, to strike home upon your remaining domestic peace, and resolved on tearing from your bosom the best solace of your blighted and fallen hopes.

"The possession of Lady Emily was my next

aim. To this step I was urged by a double impulse. The desire of inflicting pain, to the utmost, on yourself; and the triumph of holding in my power one whose contumelious rejection of my suit had rendered her the object of my bitterest resentment. My design was hurried on to its execution by proceedings, which Aldget ascertained had been adopted, relative to your right over the Montgomery property. We were aware that inquiry must confirm you in the possession of it; that the forged document I had employed, and which you perused on that fatal night, must in consequence be open to detection; and we dreaded that, when armed with this proof, you should employ measures which might involve a discovery of the actors in the whole conspiracy. The knowledge, at least the apprehension, that a living witness was somewhere in existence, to whom our secret counsels had been revealed, rendered us still more alive to fear; and conscience, that restless monitor, suffered us not to repose under this perpetual alarm. Too far advanced in guilt to hope for escape, should discovery ensue, the blow, which by its force was to leave you powerless, and indifferent to the interests of the future, was

prepared; or, should it fail of this effect, its success, I considered, would secure me against exposure for your niece's sake, in case my guilt, in the first instance, relative to your property and birthright were traced; and at all events, the gratification of my evil passions demanded the attempt.

"From Lady Bellamont I learnt the place of your retreat; and my object was baffled in its execution there, only by the sudden arrival of Lord Mowbray at Clifton, and his taking up his residence under your roof. Although the conviction of his favoured reception, both from yourself and Lady Emily, (whose heart I knew to be deeply interested,) added yet more to the gall and bitterness of my spirit, and would have driven me, in the height of vindictive feeling, to an immediate attempt; yet dread of defeat and detection withheld me; till at length your departure for Mowbray Castle appeared to place my victim still farther beyond my reach: I tracked your footsteps, however—I hovered around the walls you inhabited, resolved that no effort should be spared, no opportunity lost, of obtaining my object when accident made me acquainted with

people whose calling fitted them more than any others for the execution of my designs. I tampered with, and gained them to the enterprise, which, from this fortuitous circumstance, seemed facilitated beyond my most sanguine hopes; and from the advantage of the secret entrance to the castle, I doubted not of complete success.

" Providence, however, willed it otherwise; when already within the grasp of the hired ruffians, who were employed by me, my victim escaped. I heard from the shore the struggle that snatched her from them; and, as the discomfited band reached the boat in which I sat prepared to receive the fruits of this enterprise, we with difficulty evaded the search that ensued, and gained the vessel which lay for us in the offing, only by encountering the hazards and perils of stealing under cover of the coast.

" Stung to the quick by this reverse, and haunted by the increased danger of my situation, should detection follow, I again sought counsel from my participator in crime. Whether he felt, on any just grounds, assurance of our safety or not, I cannot say; but his language and his manner endued me with hardihood (I cannot call it

courage) to brave the worst that might ensue. I sought once more the world and its allurements, in order to drown the uneasy thoughts which ever obtruded themselves upon my moments of solitude. With a forgetfulness of the disgrace I had escaped, in total loss of character, my evil passions revived. Your return to Montgomery Hall; the conviction that followed of your innocence,—above all, the approaching union of Lady Emily with Lord Mowbray, combined to inspire me with yet bitterer hatred and envy of a happiness in which I could not participate, and which I had in vain endeavoured to destroy.

"Driven by the fiend, I again revolved means of revenge for the disappointments that had recoiled on my former projects. Lady Bellamont was the only victim within my reach; I knew your affection for her, though less than for her sister, to be yet deeply grafted in your heart, and I had joy in the thought that an opportunity of inflicting pain was still left me. In other circumstances, a triumph, attended with so little difficulty and *eclat*, would have wanted interest for me. Lady Bellamont had already suffered in the world's estima-

tion, and her fall, therefore, was not likely to be a matter of surprise, or to give distinction (dishonourable distinction!) to the man who consummated her ruin. Yet, the blow I was aware would not be without its effect, where I most desired it should fall; and my part was taken.

"Lady Bellamont, sunk to the lowest point of degradation, stamped as the easy prey, and then the cast-away of her seducer; abandoned and neglected, a by-word to the world, and a reproach to her family, presented a picture of triumph to my revengeful spirit, sufficient to have armed it for an undertaking of ten times the infamy. I essayed, and I succeeded. I revelled in the misery I had consummated till even its perfection pained me; for refinement of cruelty could proceed no farther. The power of torturing my victim failed at last; I had regrets, but not for the enormities committed; I sorrowed, but it was, that human suffering had reached its utmost limit, and that misery, such as I beheld, exceeded my powers of adding to its burthen. To remorse, to poverty, and to disease, I left then the last office of giving to the grave what remained of Lady Bellamont.

I had secured to them the prey they already hovered over; my work and my triumph was complete.

"Start not at this avowal of infamy and of murder! the self-degradation which it entails on me, the abhorrence to which I willingly consign my name, must speak for the motive which actuates me; it is justice to you, it is a strong conviction of my guilt towards your unhappy niece, Lady Bellamont, who, though weak and vain perhaps, was not wicked, till rendered so by my villany, that urges me to this open confession of my crime.

"I write to you, I believe, from the bed of death. The Almighty has stricken me through the very being whom I had brought down prematurely and with dishonour to the grave. In *her weakness*, the victim of *my* strength has recoiled upon me, and in the hour of my unhallowed triumph I am laid low—as she is! Oh! General Montgomery, could you know the agony, the torture of spirit which already brings me to a knowledge of the punishment that awaits my crimes, you would not refuse me the consolation of your pardon; you would not deny me the efficacy of your prayers,

that I may yet be saved by a sincere and heartfelt repentance. I know that there is mercy, but I have rejected the terms upon which it is offered, till too late. I have despised the warnings, and set at nought the voice of my God, till he will show mercy no longer. I am plunged in despair—yet pray, pray for me—even *me*—and forgive the man, who on his bended knees and with his dying voice implores your pardon.

"AUGUSTUS CARLTON."

The letter fell from General Montgomery's hand as he ceased reading, and an appalling awe took possession of him; but when the first agitation and horror, occasioned by the disclosures it contained, had in some degree subsided, the merciful hand of Providence was deeply and gratefully acknowledged by him; and the incidents which had led to the developement of the whole mystery, were such as could be ascribed to no other cause than that Almighty power which brings good out of evil.

"If we accustomed ourselves," said General Montgomery, "to trace throughout our lives the circumstances which overrule and decide our for-

tunes, how little should we pride ourselves on our *own* discernment; how much more humbly should we walk in our path; how clearly should we see, that though it is ours to act diligently for the best, and to *depend* upon a reward, still that the result of our actions, and the issue of our dependance, are ever under the guidance, and in the gift of an Almighty Providence, who wills that good and evil should sometimes come to us through unexpected channels, and through unforeseen instruments."

General Montgomery's mind, relieved, as far as an explanation of the incidents went, relating to himself, and to an innocent individual, (Corrie Lovel,) from the anxiety and anguish which for a long time had pressed upon it, gradually recovered its serenity and peace.

The wounds, however, inflicted by the conduct and fate of his unhappy niece, were of a nature which, though resignation led him to endure without repining, yet no lapse of years could entirely close, and the memory of them would often steal over and embitter his happier moments.

Among the painful circumstances of a minor

kind which he had still to bear, was the conviction (than which nothing is more wounding to a generous mind) of the atrocious villany of a man in whom he had hitherto trusted with such implicit confidence. The knowledge of Mr. Aldget's turpitude rendered it absolutely necessary for General Montgomery to withdraw his affairs from his hands; and the result of this measure was the public disclosure of Mr. Aldget's conduct, and the total ruin of his character.

In the happiness of his loved niece, General Montgomery could, indeed, boast of a sunshine of comfort and of glory, which shed a radiant brightness on the remainder of his days.

Felicity, unalloyed, is not the portion of humanity; but felicity, unembittered by any self-reproach, and in as great a portion as ever pertained to humanity, was the lot of Lord and Lady Mowbray.

Time, in a happy and honourable union, brings, with added years, the added "proofs of recollected love," to swell the present store. In its very continuance, there is fresh motive for it to continue still. A thousand tributary streams of mutual in-

terests and habits flow into the channel of wedded love, and on such affections

> "Time but the impression stronger makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear."

Not so is it in the illusory bliss of illicit passion; there every added hour of guilty communion destroys the illusion, and blasts the short-lived happiness of such unholy love, and in the ending, for the end comes quickly, what an arid desert and hideous devastation are left behind!

In the foregoing narrative, the picture of virtue and of vice, under these forms, has been attempted; and it is believed, that in the different fate of the two sisters, may be traced the fate of all who like them shall choose either the pure path which leads to lasting happiness, or follow the downward road to misery and shame, through the PERILOUS MAZES OF FLIRTATION.

THE END.

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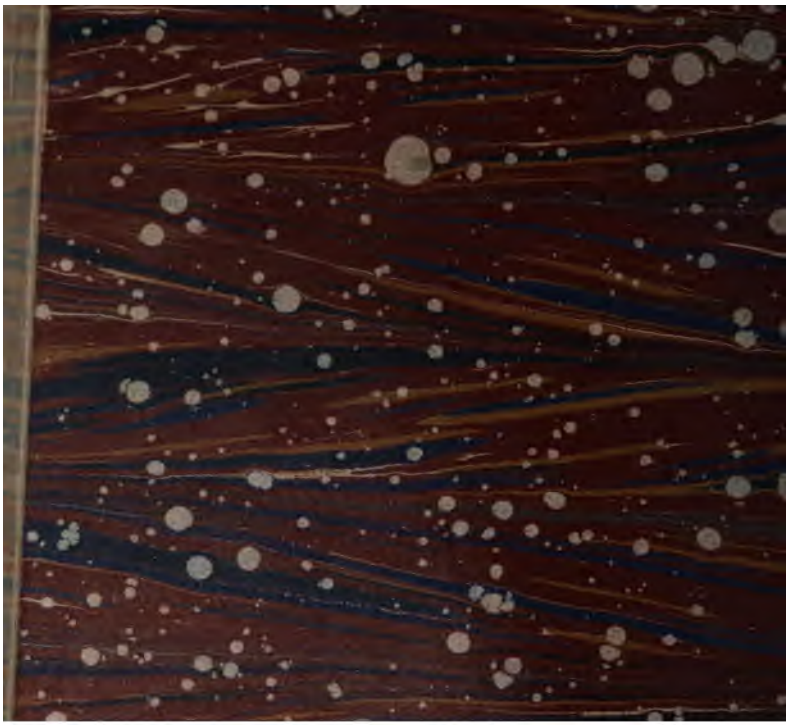

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